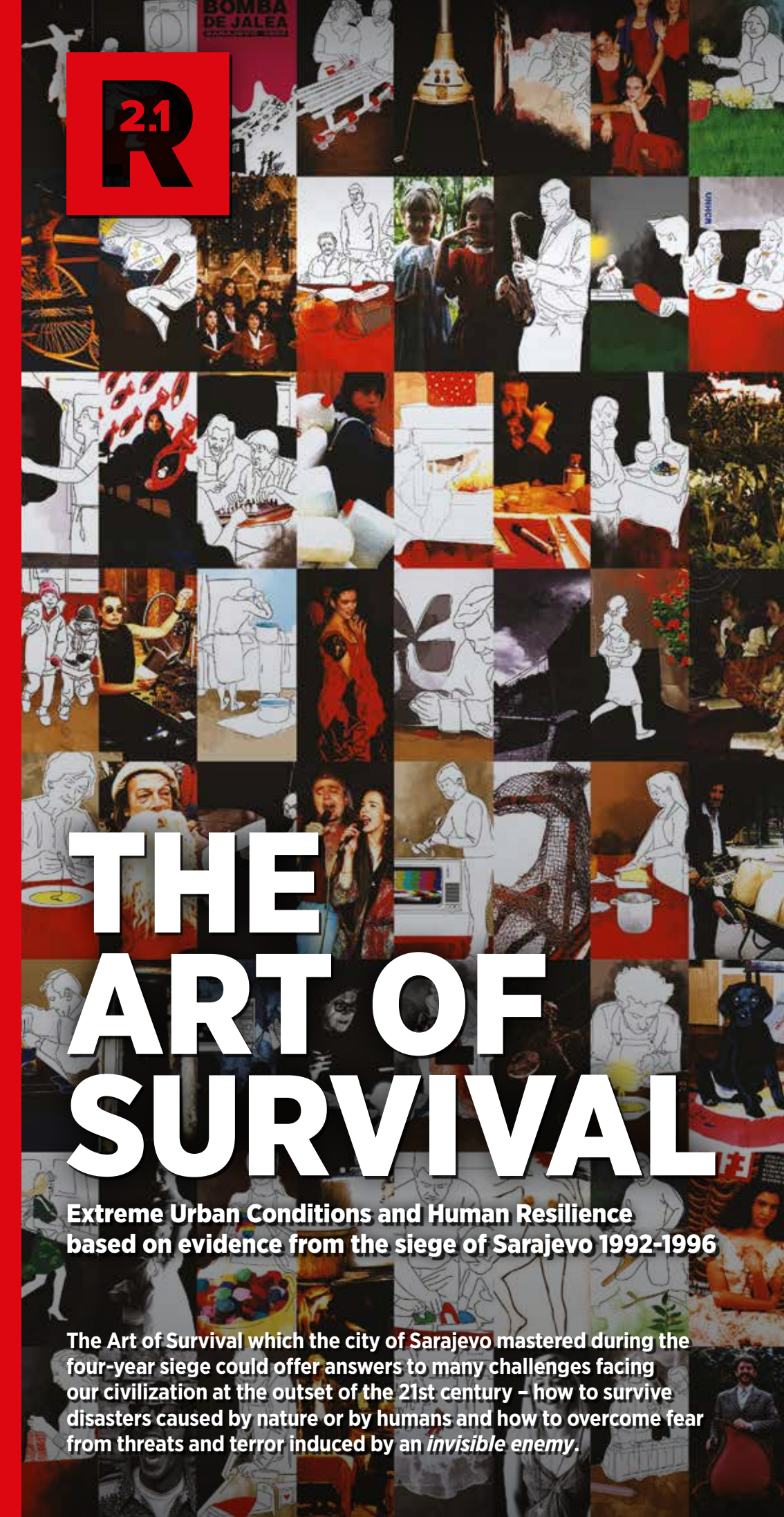


THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Extreme Urban Conditions and Human Resilience based on evidence from the siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996

The Art of Survival which the city of Sarajevo mastered during the four-year siege could offer answers to many challenges facing our civilization at the outset of the 21st century – how to survive disasters caused by nature or by humans and how to overcome fear from threats and terror induced by an *invisible enemy*.

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Extreme Urban Conditions and Human Resilience based on evidence from the siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996

EDITORIAL

Following the 21st century radical changes on this planet, we have realized it was high time for us to give new contribution based on evidence from the siege of Sarajevo experience (1992-1996), to the urgent need of establishing a resilience module – for the sake of terrified individuals and unprepared societies alike. Extreme urban conditions produced a parallel civilization in which creativity was a basic necessity. The process of adaptation left no space for stagnation and helplessness.

Work was the law of mental and physical survival. Working towards resilience kept people's minds occupied – work eliminated thoughts that could destroy their motivation.

It was necessary to establish a balance in the extreme urban conditions of life. This was done through creating peaceful, simple, normal situations, according to one's personal needs.

During the siege, the continuation of *normal* life in the city, the continuation of creativity, was as important as bread or medicine or water for all citizens of Sarajevo.

In this book we are not presenting here a theory, but a real life evidence of an open mind potential to win in the face of the unknown, the new, the uncertain and the unthinkable. We believe that citizens who lived the Sarajevo siege presents an example of hope for mankind facing serious threats and the changes so far unthinkable on this planet of ours.

Suada Kapić
Author and Editor

Survival Map - The Siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996
Published in 1996, redesigned in 2010.
FAMA Collection (www.famacollection.org)

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 20th century, during the wars in the former Yugoslavia,the city of Sarajevo survived the longest siege in human history. On April 5, 1992 Sarajevo, the capital of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was attacked. On May 4, 1992 the city was completely **BLOCKADED**. The Yugoslav People's army, aided by the Bosnian Serbs, surrounded the city and started to tighten the circle around 500,000 citizens. The city which lies in the valley of the Miljacka river is surrounded by mountains on which 260 tanks, 120 mortars and many weapons of smaller caliber where placed. A circle 60 kilometers in circumference closed around Sarajevo. Sixty thousand (meters) divided by 2,100 (that's how many pieces of artillery were deployed around Sarajevo) tells you that at every 35 meters there was a piece of artillery.

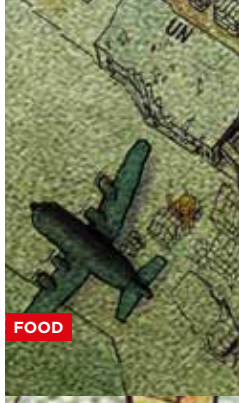
The aggressor blocked all **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**, destroyed the Post Office and the city was left without telephones and communication with the outside world was rendered impossible. And the destruction of the city began. **SHELLING**: Every day the city was hit by some 4,000 shells, four million shells were fired at the city – targeting, among others: hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, synagogues, maternity hospitals, libraries, museums, and the places where the citizens stood in lines for bread and water. During the years of the siege, all the city streets were exposed to the most accurate **SNIPER** fire. Virtually every citizen of Sarajevo was the target of. There was not a single 50 meter length of street not exposed to it. That was a special kind of terror: it was made clear that there was no freedom of movement and that no movement was permitted on the streets. Such a thing has never before been recorded in the history of an urban area, and the situation lasted for four years. 'There was sniper fire anywhere we went. They preyed upon us like animals. When the snipers stop, you run. But once you cross the bridge, they start shooting again. Suddenly you find yourself riveted to the spot: you're in the middle of the street, you're aware what this street is, and suddenly a sniper starts shooting but you cannot move. It's just for a moment – then you move and go ahead.'

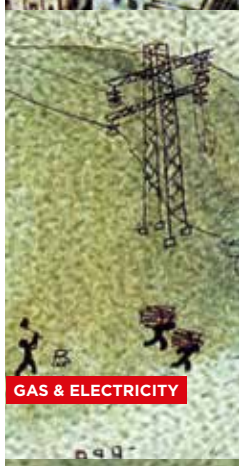
The cemeteries were expanding. **FUNERALS**: "Frequently, or exclusively, the burials took place at night, and the first time I naively took a flashlight and everybody around me screamed, 'A flashlight! Are you crazy, we will all get killed, turn it off!' As I am a priest. I knew some prayers by heart, so I could perform funerals in the dark." During the funerals imams sometimes had to jump into the graves for shelter, so later they started to perform burials at night – that way fewer people were endangered; they tried to preserve as many lives as possible.

THE FOOD supply was fast disappearing. UN humanitarian airlift began on July 3, 1992, to provide humanitarian supplies for Sarajevo.It was the longest airlift in the history of aviation, in the history of modern warfare: 467 days longer than the one in Berlin. Each UNHCR or UNPROFOR plane brought 30 tons of food and first aid supplies to Sarajevo. Every citizen of Sarajevo was entitled to 1,250 grams of beans, 300 grams of sugar, 300 grams of oil and 1 kg of flour from humanitarian aid. All the city **WATER** sources were kept by the aggressor; the water supply was reduced from a total of 2,500 liters per second (l/s) before the war, to a flow rate of 5 l/s coming from a small water source within the city, and approximately 30-40 l/s from the Hrasnica source at the outskirts of the city. All **GAS** installations were beyond the siege lines. The aggressor cut all gas supply to the city, they simply closed all gas valves. **ELECTRICITY** supply was cut off. The Electro Distribution workers were doing their best to repair the transmission lines. It often happened that a transmission pole was raised only to be knocked down during the following night. The workers sometimes had to climb the same pole as many as 15 times to replace a damaged insulator. **THE SARAJEVO TUNNEL** was constructed between March and June of 1993 during the siege of Sarajevo. The tunnel allowing food, war supplies, and humanitarian aid to come into the city, and allowing people to get out. In March 1996, after NATO air-strikes and the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, the blockade of Sarajevo was lifted and a peaceful reintegration of the city was effected.

DEBLOCKADE: On March 19, 1996 the aggressor left the occupied district of the city - Grbavica - which was the last part of the city to be returned to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton Peace Agreement. Over 11,000 persons were killed in Sarajevo – close to 1,600 where children. More than 50,000 persons were wounded, a great number of whom remain invalids. The siege of the city lasted from May 1992 to March 1996 or 1,395 days, which is the longest siege in the modern history of mankind.

Yet, amidst all this destruction and suffering, Sarajevans continued to work, create amidst all the odds. During the siege, the continuation of normal life in the city, the continuation of creativity, was as important as bread or medicine or water for all citizens of Sarajevo. **THE ART OF SURVIVAL** which the city of Sarajevo mastered during the four-year siege could offer answers to many challenges facing our civilization at the outset of the 21st century – how to survive disasters caused by nature or by humans and how to overcome fear from threats and terror induced by an *invisible enemy*.





MARKETPLACE
Market rules were: you exchange what you've got for what you haven't got. For example, you barter 3 kg of tobacco for 1 kg of powdered milk, or cigarettes for flour and sugar.

DAILY TASKS

A FLYING MAN
In the performance, this ladder raised a flying man, put fire and water together, and air: the three strange worlds. But we actually stayed in *this* world.

CREATIVITY

I cultivated vegetables and flowers in my garden.

BALANCE

A Flying Man by Enes Sivac

DOGHOUSE OUT OF WASHING MACHINE
'Do not throw away anything you cannot use any more!' We therefore didn't throw our washing machine away even though it no longer served its purpose as there was no water, and no electricity. As our dog didn't have a doghouse, we made one out of the washing machine, even though the dog was always inside with us, because he was afraid of grenades. But the exercise was useful because we spent some time not thinking about anything other than how to make the doghouse.

CREATIVITY

HOSPITAL
Can you imagine that we assisted births by candlelight? There was only one candle in the entire maternity ward. One candle for two deliveries at the same time, one candle for three babies born at the same time.

DAILY TASKS

I trained in athletics.

BALANCE

BOMBA DE JALEA

SARAJEVO 1992

BOSNIAN HOUSE

We decided to build a house as an artistic / anthropological project about a time in history; and we built it inside the Cultural Center. We decided to build, even though it was a time of destruction. It was a huge effort; all the building material had to be brought from ruins. And then we screen-printed a poster; we called the project *A Jelly Bomb*. In several languages.

CREATIVITY

FAMA: *A Bosnian House*
Architect: Ognjenka Finci

A WATER BOTTLE TROLLEY

We used a sled and roller skates to make a trolley for water transportation.

CREATIVITY

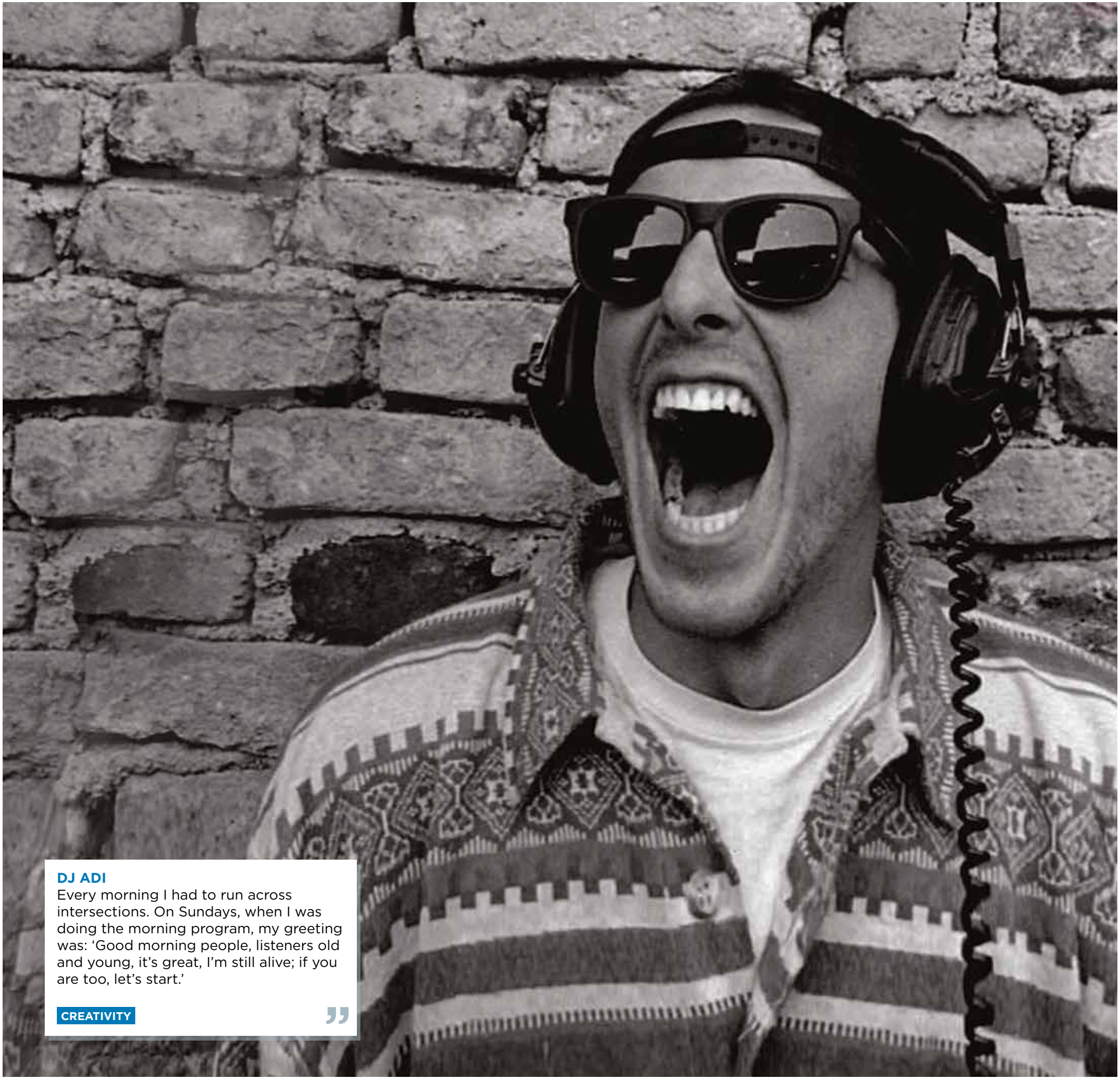
LIGHTING

I made a lamp. I inserted an IV tube into a gas hose, and put an empty cartridge from a ballpoint pen in its other end; it created enough light to illuminate the room.

DAILY TASKS

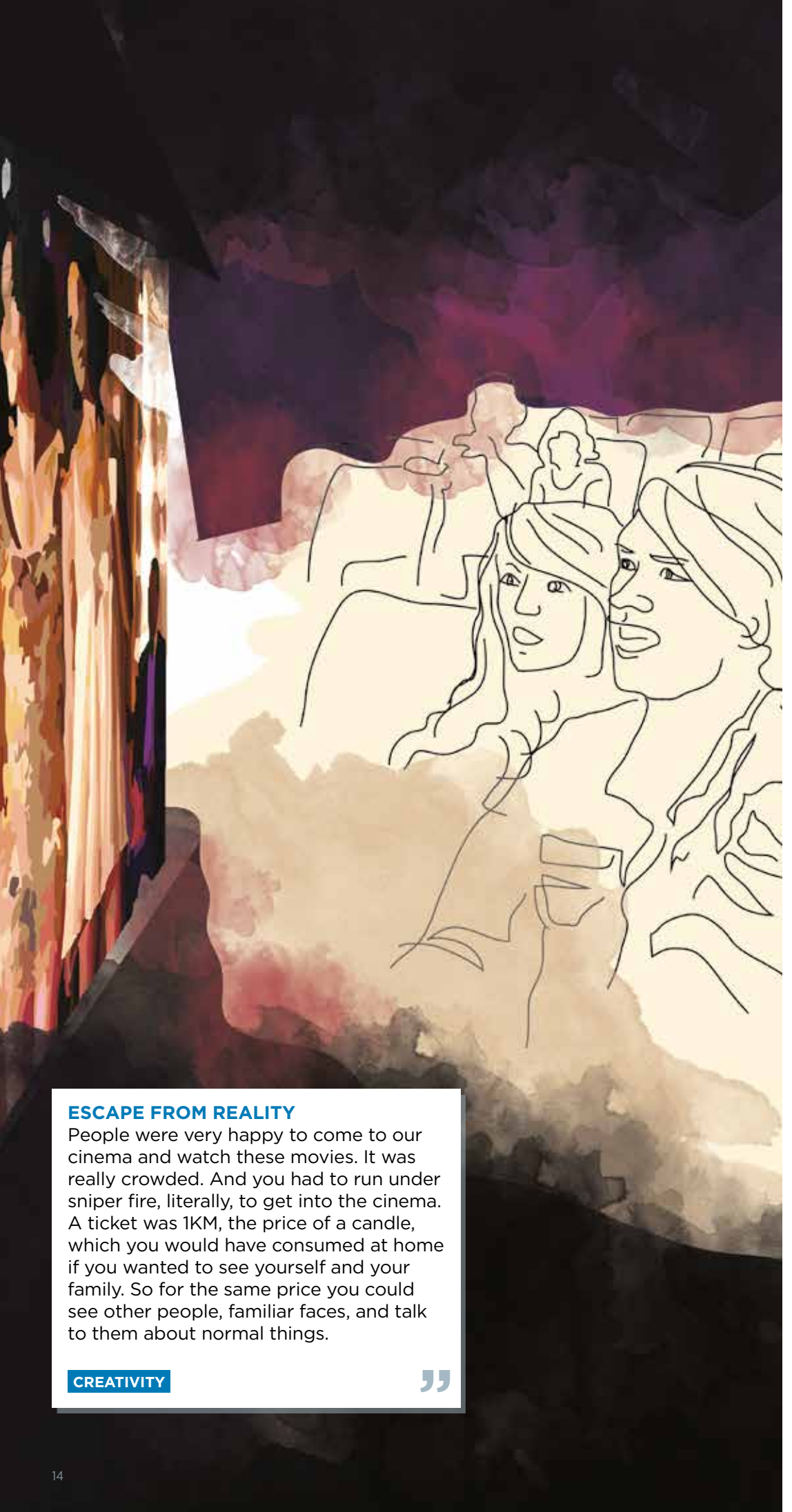
I took rests and talked to my wife.

BALANCE



DJ ADI
Every morning I had to run across intersections. On Sundays, when I was doing the morning program, my greeting was: ‘Good morning people, listeners old and young, it’s great, I’m still alive; if you are too, let’s start.’

CREATIVITY



ESCAPE FROM REALITY

People were very happy to come to our cinema and watch these movies. It was really crowded. And you had to run under sniper fire, literally, to get into the cinema. A ticket was 1KM, the price of a candle, which you would have consumed at home if you wanted to see yourself and your family. So for the same price you could see other people, familiar faces, and talk to them about normal things.

CREATIVITY

National Theater:
Ravel's Bolero

RAVEL'S BOLERO

We created a professional ballet performance. As important as it was for us dancers to come to rehearsals every day and challenge our physical and mental endurance, it was also important for the audience to come and see the performance. It was a kind of a assurance that, after all, we did live in a world where it was possible to achieve things that even in normal life were not easy to achieve; namely, a ballet performance.

CREATIVITY

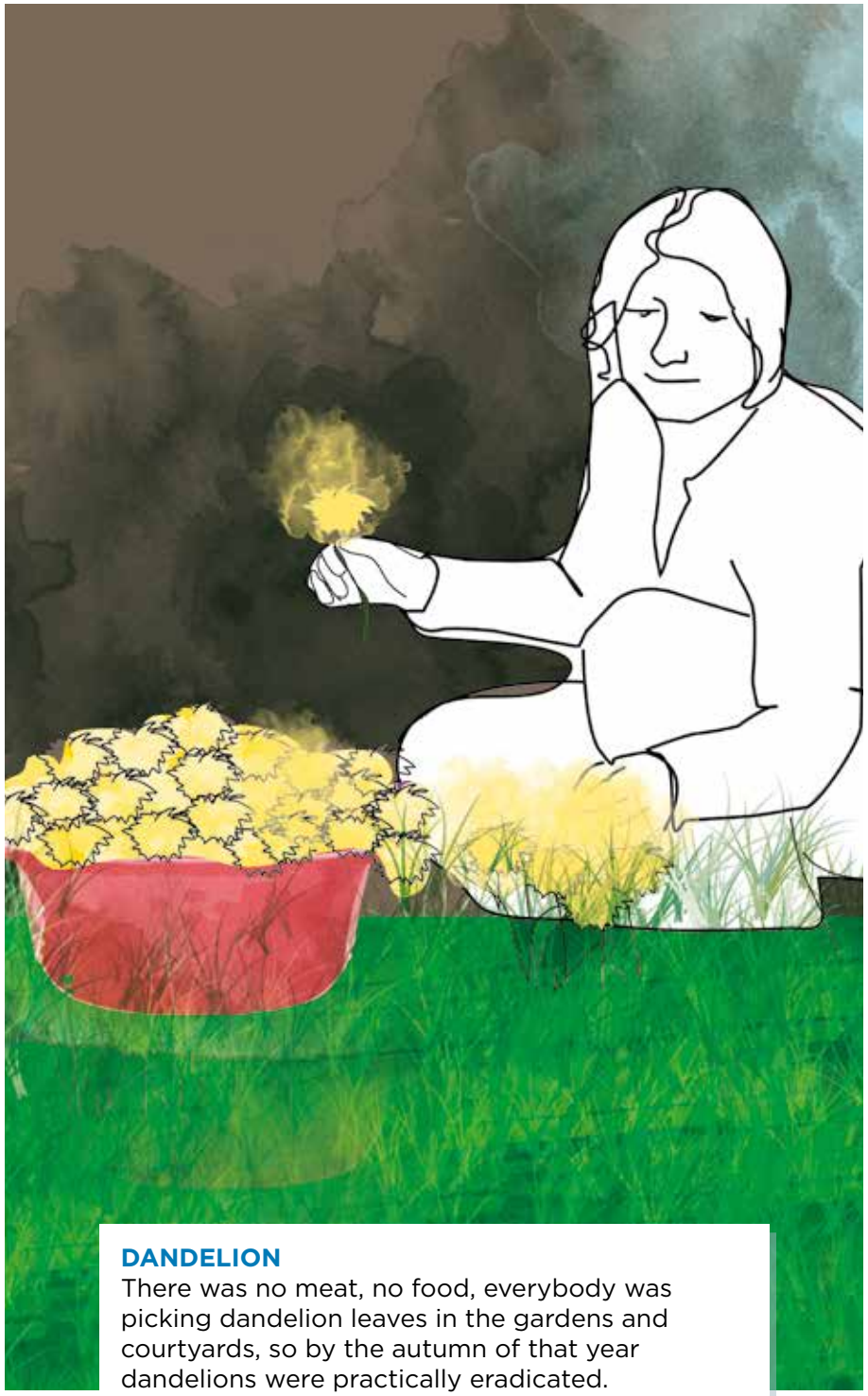
BARTER

I made a flower-shaped hair ornament, something unusual, and exchanged it for a pack of diapers, which was something I couldn't afford at the time.

DAILY TASKS

I knitted, crocheted – anything to keep my hands busy.

BALANCE



DANDELION
There was no meat, no food, everybody was picking dandelion leaves in the gardens and courtyards, so by the autumn of that year dandelions were practically eradicated.

CREATIVITY

GARDENS
I improvised a windowsill-sized garden, literally on my windowsill. I had 27 kinds of vegetables. Zucchini flowers hanging from my window never failed to thrill passers-by. I had various types of peppers, including hot cow-horn peppers.

DAILY TASKS

I was preparing for journalism exams.

BALANCE

FEAR
If someone was afraid, they said they were afraid. If someone loved someone, they immediately said it, they showed it clearly. If we wanted to give each other a hand, that's what we did.

DAILY TASKS

I was stitching a large piece of needlepoint.

BALANCE

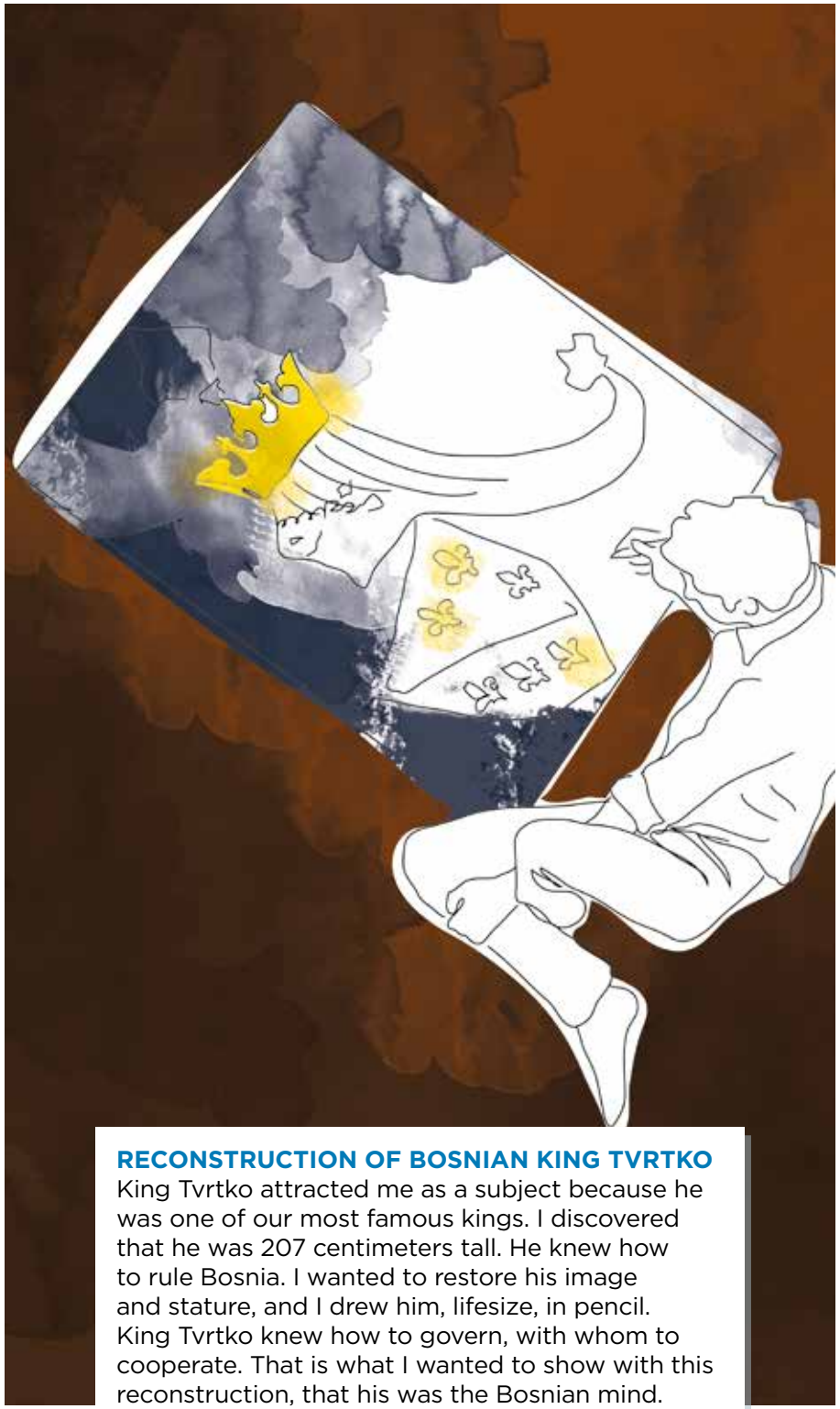
AMRA'S EXHIBITION
I immediately knew that I needed to do something, to exhibit something. And this is that something.

CREATIVITY

THE CYCLIST
I had a huge desire for the runners (people running across bridges under sniper fire) to see my 'flying man' in the air. While putting the Cyclist up between the two banks I was constantly under sniper fire.

CREATIVITY

The Cyclist by Enes Sivac



RECONSTRUCTION OF BOSNIAN KING TVRTKO

King Tvrtko attracted me as a subject because he was one of our most famous kings. I discovered that he was 207 centimeters tall. He knew how to rule Bosnia. I wanted to restore his image and stature, and I drew him, lifesize, in pencil. King Tvrtko knew how to govern, with whom to cooperate. That is what I wanted to show with this reconstruction, that his was the Bosnian mind.

CREATIVITY

TRANSPORT

A lot of times I was faced with a situation where it would be crazy enough to pass certain city parts by plane, let alone on my bike, as they were regularly under sniper fire.

DAILY TASKS

I went Painting or gardening.

BALANCE

TRAM

We, the city transport managers, tried to protect trams any way we could. We set containers and buses as sniper protection, and later on even pieces of cloth, to prevent snipers from seeing when a tram was passing.

DAILY TASKS

I went to choir rehearsals.

BALANCE

CHRISTMAS IN THE CATHEDRAL

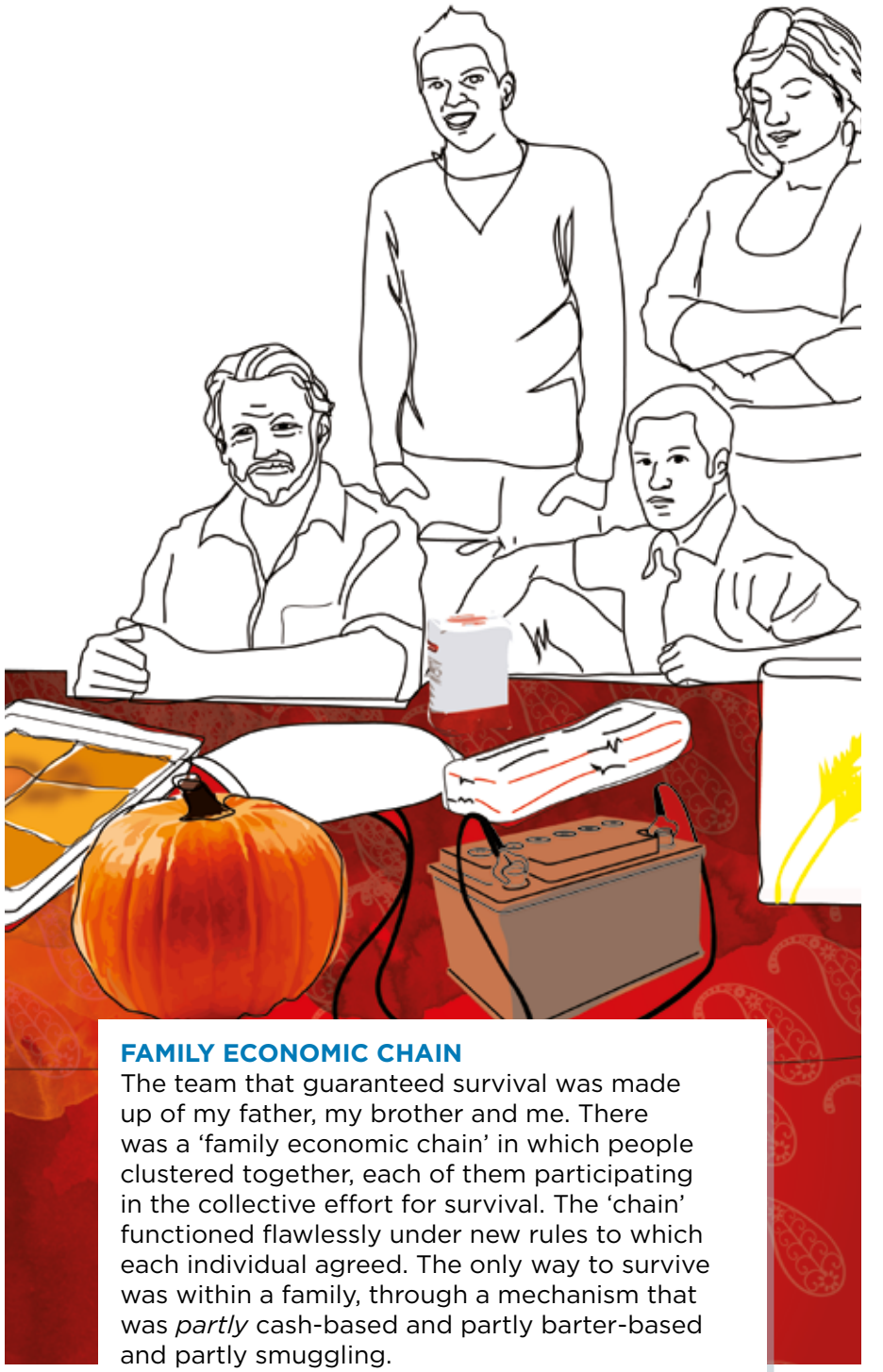
We never failed to celebrate Christmas at the Cathedral, to decorate Christmas trees, to dress festively and have the choir singing Christmas carols. It meant a lot to all the citizens, it gave them strength because it showed that the town was still living.

CREATIVITY

CHILDREN

I invented things that could make children happy, to make them forget the shelling for a while. I admired the way children endured all that, as if they were adults.

CREATIVITY



FAMILY ECONOMIC CHAIN

The team that guaranteed survival was made up of my father, my brother and me. There was a 'family economic chain' in which people clustered together, each of them participating in the collective effort for survival. The 'chain' functioned flawlessly under new rules to which each individual agreed. The only way to survive was within a family, through a mechanism that was *partly* cash-based and partly barter-based and partly smuggling.

CREATIVITY

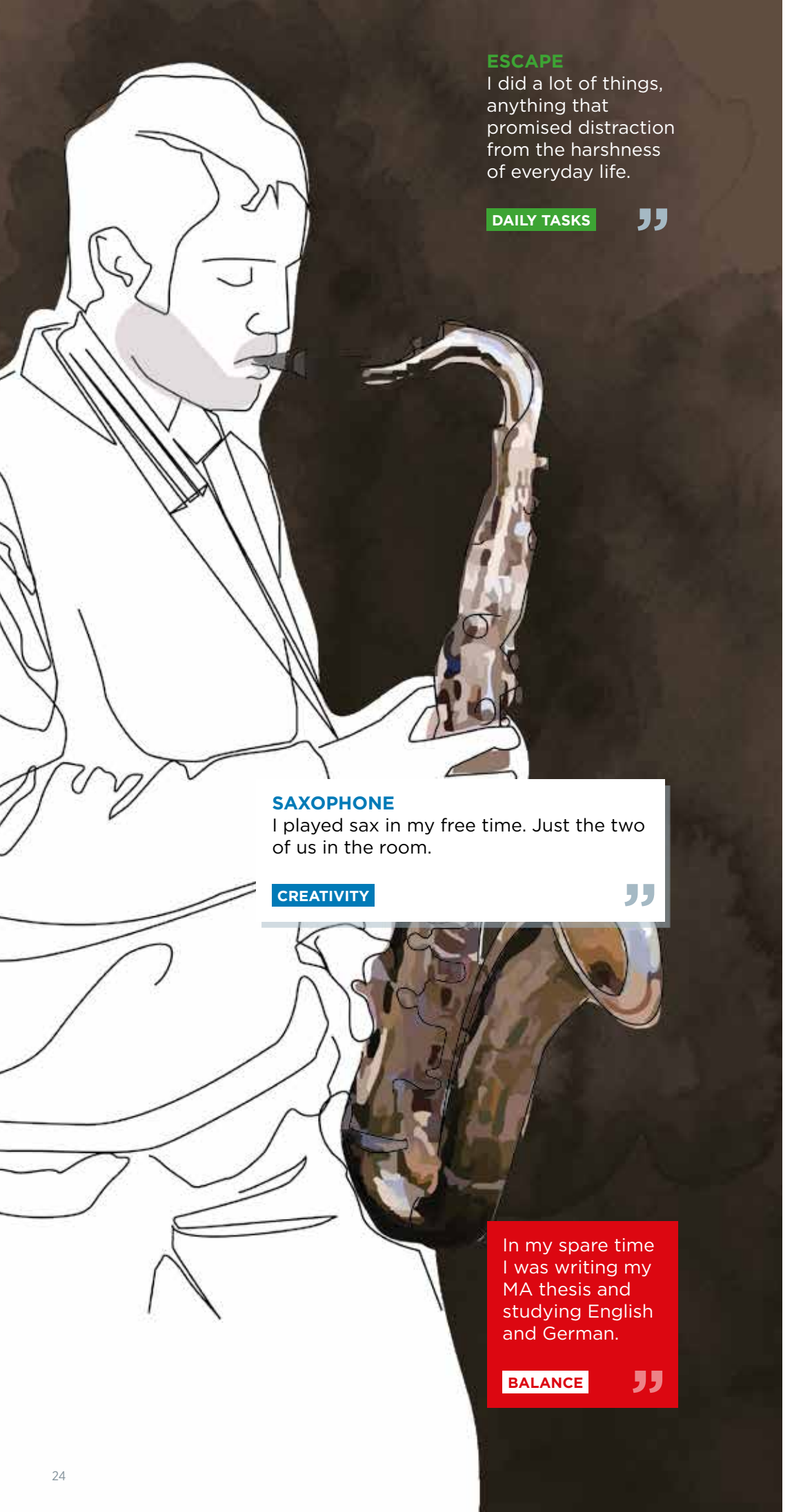
RECIPES

I used to make rice popcorn. You put oil in the pan and wait for it to heat up. Then you put the rice in and wait for it to swell and become golden. This is good both as a meal and as a snack, for entertainment.

DAILY TASKS

I mostly listened to music.

BALANCE



ESCAPE
I did a lot of things, anything that promised distraction from the harshness of everyday life.

DAILY TASKS

SAXOPHONE
I played sax in my free time. Just the two of us in the room.

CREATIVITY

In my spare time I was writing my MA thesis and studying English and German.

BALANCE

PING PONG
We improvised and made a ping pong table in the basement. There was a light bulb connected to an accumulator. We played for hours.

CREATIVITY

HOSPITAL
Imagine a man on the operating table in a room where the temperature is -5°C. We practically worked in what medicine considers a kind of hibernation. Maybe that's why our patients were able to stand long and difficult surgical procedures. Hot meals were prepared in cauldrons over a fire. Laundry was done in the same way, an average of two tons of laundry was washed by hand every day.

DAILY TASKS

I taught math to children on my street; I used to work as a math teacher a long time ago.

BALANCE

BATTERED PUMPKIN BLOSSOM
We plucked a pumpkin flower hanging from our neighbor's balcony and fried it in powdered egg batter. Only later did someone tell me that it was a classic French recipe...

CREATIVITY

FOOD
There was only one oven in the whole neighborhood, so we all baked our bread there, we had to wait in line for 4-5 hours.

DAILY TASKS

I rode my bike.

BALANCE

CLOTHESLINE
I used to boil the linen by putting it in black bags and hanging it on the clothesline in the sun.

CREATIVITY

A BOY AND JERRY CANS

That was the time of jerry cans, a terrible time. You had to go to the brewery to fetch water. It was icy, your hands would be freezing cold. You get home and have nothing to warm them up with. If you carry four or five-liter buckets of water on your back, you get home with your back wet. I made jerry can straps out of some belts – that way my folks could carry more jerry cans at once.

CREATIVITY

CHESS

We played chess sitting in the stairwell, or in the basement, or in any protected corner we could find. That was our way of resistance, our battle through sport, through something that meant that death does not reign in Sarajevo.

CREATIVITY

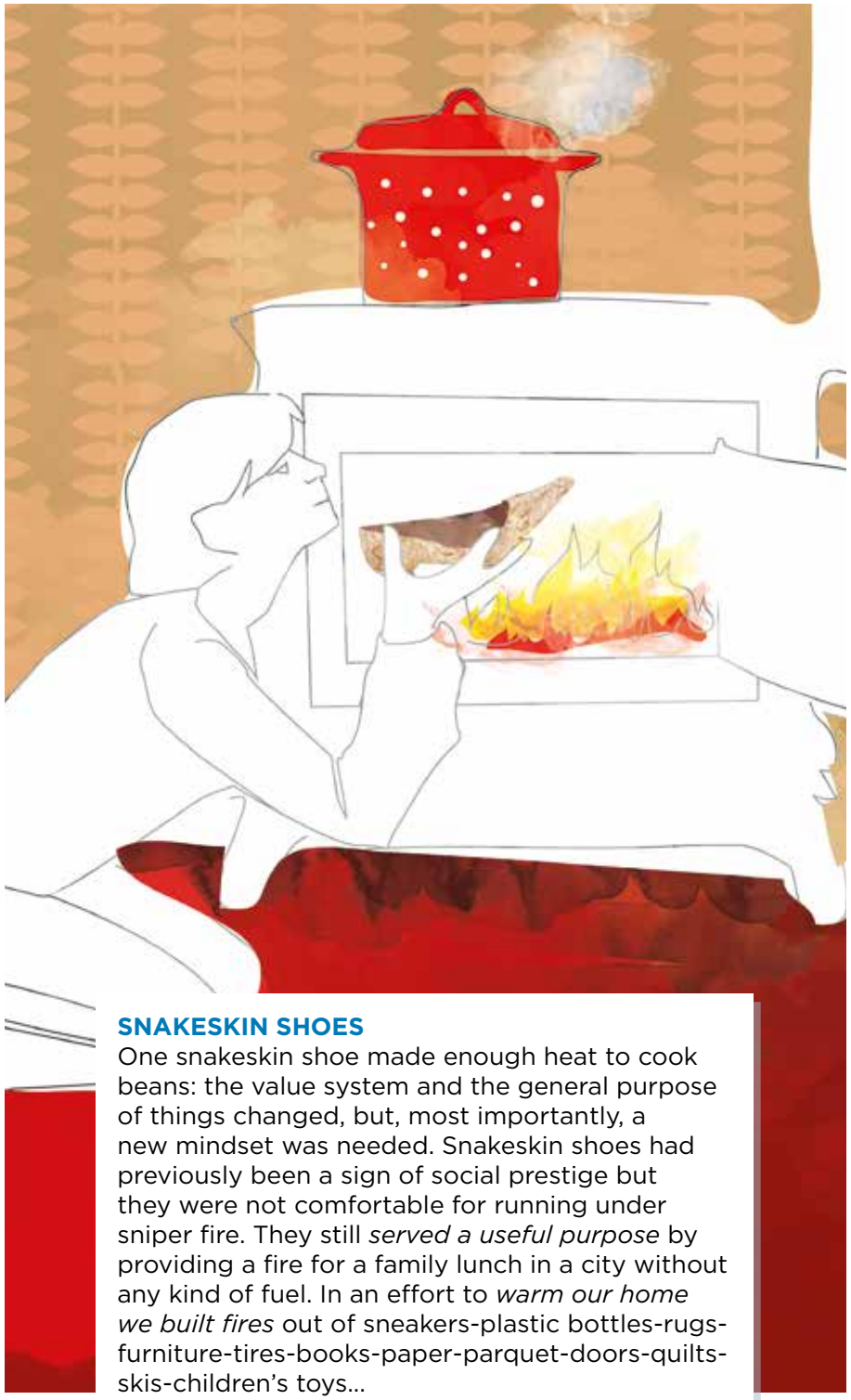
WATER

I made a shower on my balcony. I tied a bucket to a beam so that the rain would fall into it. I soap myself and pull the rope, the bucket tips and I rinse myself with rainwater.

DAILY TASKS

I learned Italian.

BALANCE



SNAKESKIN SHOES

One snakeskin shoe made enough heat to cook beans: the value system and the general purpose of things changed, but, most importantly, a new mindset was needed. Snakeskin shoes had previously been a sign of social prestige but they were not comfortable for running under sniper fire. They still *served a useful purpose* by providing a fire for a family lunch in a city without any kind of fuel. In an effort to *warm our home we built fires* out of sneakers-plastic bottles-rugs-furniture-tires-books-paper-parquet-doors-quilts-skis-children's toys...

CREATIVITY

BASEMENT

During heavy shelling we stayed in the stairway, just outside my apartment. All the neighbors from our floor and the floor above were there. We were lucky: we never had a direct hit.

DAILY TASKS

I would style my neighbors' hair to make them more beautiful.

BALANCE

INVENTIONS

We went to bed as early as possible and got up as late as possible – that way we skipped at least one meal.

DAILY TASKS

AN ARTIST

Laughter is the recipe for our mental health. And creation is a source of joy.

CREATIVITY

In my free time I made wartime 'gourmet specialties'.

BALANCE

Edin Numankadic, an artist

TRANSPORT
We had to transport water, firewood and humanitarian aid through the city with no cars, and with very dangerous intersections. So an ocean of hand-made trolleys appeared in Sarajevo, made of practically everything.

CREATIVITY

COOKING THE BATTERIES
I cook the dead Sony batteries for three minutes, with a pinch of salt, and bring them back to life!

CREATIVITY

GOLF
Golf auto could run on cooking oil, and if we could spare some cooking oil we'd add it to diesel, a Golf would run on anything! It never broke down. It jumped up, drove downhill, uphill. I think that the Golf saved Sarajevo.

DAILY TASKS

I played football.

BALANCE

AMINA PRODUCES ELECTRICITY
My son and I constructed a *bike-powered electricity generator*: you push the pedals and a lamp lights up. We're *producing electricity* and it's a great work-out as well.

CREATIVITY

BREAD

I turned a pressure cooker into a stove; that saved a lot of firewood. I turned the cooker upside down, made and fitted a small grate, a stovepipe, and small stove legs so that it could stand stable.

CREATIVITY

RECIPES

I often made natural herb remedies. For example, a mixture of methylated spirits and garlic as a remedy for dizziness and for general strengthening. Every day you take one drop more until you reach 25 drops. We maintained our strength with the help of these mixtures. I shared it with my neighbors.

DAILY TASKS

I spent my free time with my wife in the garden.

BALANCE

HEATING

In ‘92 we put our winter clothes on and didn’t take them off the whole winter. We slept in our clothes because of the night shelling - we often had to get up and go to the basement.

DAILY TASKS

A WARM-UP

I made my kids run around the apartment, so they’d get tired and wouldn’t ask to go out. And I entertained them improvising figurines from fairy tales, like characters from Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White ... I also made clothes for the figurines, so the children could play dressing them up. After that I had to do this for all the children in the street.

CREATIVITY

I mostly played with my band.

BALANCE

TIPS
Pick your lunch, catch your dinner!

DAILY TASKS

FLAMENCO
I put on a dress from the National Theater collection, put my makeup on, stepped on the stage and sang to a frozen, hungry and thirsty audience for whom this visit was more important than anything else. Face to face with the audience, who were in the same danger when coming to a concert or a show and when going home. We all lived like prisoners, both those of us who had come to play music, sing or act in a play, and the audience alike. All of us played together the Sarajevo Roulette, the *Danse Macabre*, that dance of death.

CREATIVITY

In my spare time I read things that would calm me down.

BALANCE

Flamenco by Dragana Ilic

BATHING
A piece of shrapnel pierced the downpipe running next to our bathroom window. I used the plastic foil we were all using instead of window panes, and made a funnel which went straight to my bath. So when it rained, my bath would fill with rain water. My invention was how to take a bath in two liters of water.

CREATIVITY

WATER
I was always waiting in line for water, as I could not carry more than 70 liters at once.

DAILY TASKS

In my free time I was repairing watches.

BALANCE

HAND-OPERATED FAN
Summers being so hot, I made a hand-operated fan from a variety of waste sources. And it worked.

CREATIVITY

HEATING
As there was no electricity or gas, we had to cut branches or gather paper to survive. A pension was worth two eggs.

DAILY TASKS

I walked my dog.

BALANCE

In my free time I did my best not to think about the war.

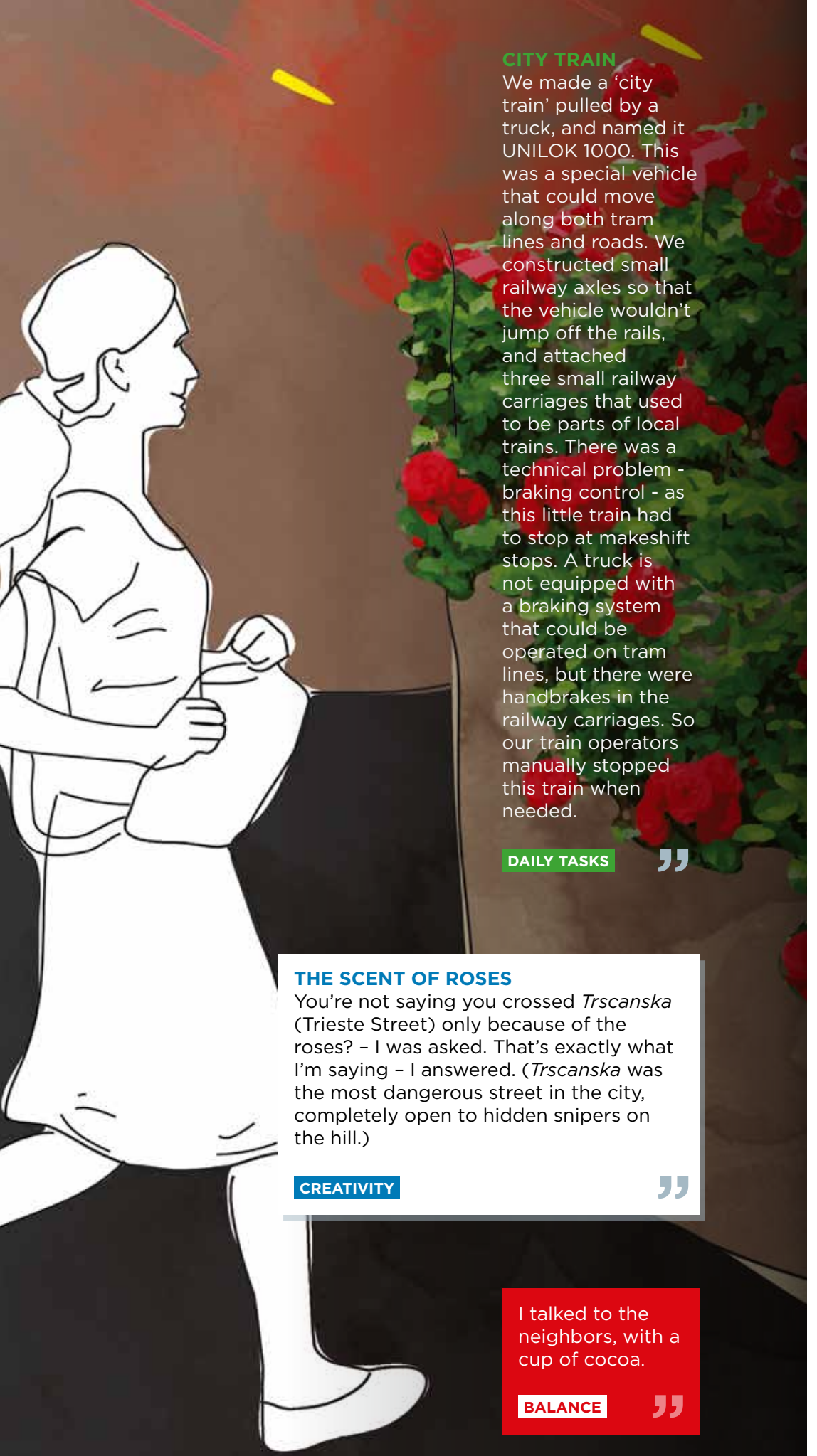
BALANCE

COMMUNICATIONS
During the war, radio amateurs passed on more than 20 million messages.

DAILY TASKS

THE FILM FESTIVAL
Haris Pasovic, the festival director said: opened a film festival in three theaters simultaneously. It lasted 10 days; we presented 140 films from around the world and there were about 20,000 visitors. World famous film directors supported us, and sent their movies on VHS. We found generators and petrol so that we could screen the movies. People were running under sniper fire to get into the cinema. There were large crowds. It was an incredible atmosphere.

CREATIVITY



CITY TRAIN

We made a ‘city train’ pulled by a truck, and named it UNILOK 1000. This was a special vehicle that could move along both tram lines and roads. We constructed small railway axles so that the vehicle wouldn’t jump off the rails, and attached three small railway carriages that used to be parts of local trains. There was a technical problem - braking control - as this little train had to stop at makeshift stops. A truck is not equipped with a braking system that could be operated on tram lines, but there were handbrakes in the railway carriages. So our train operators manually stopped this train when needed.

DAILY TASKS

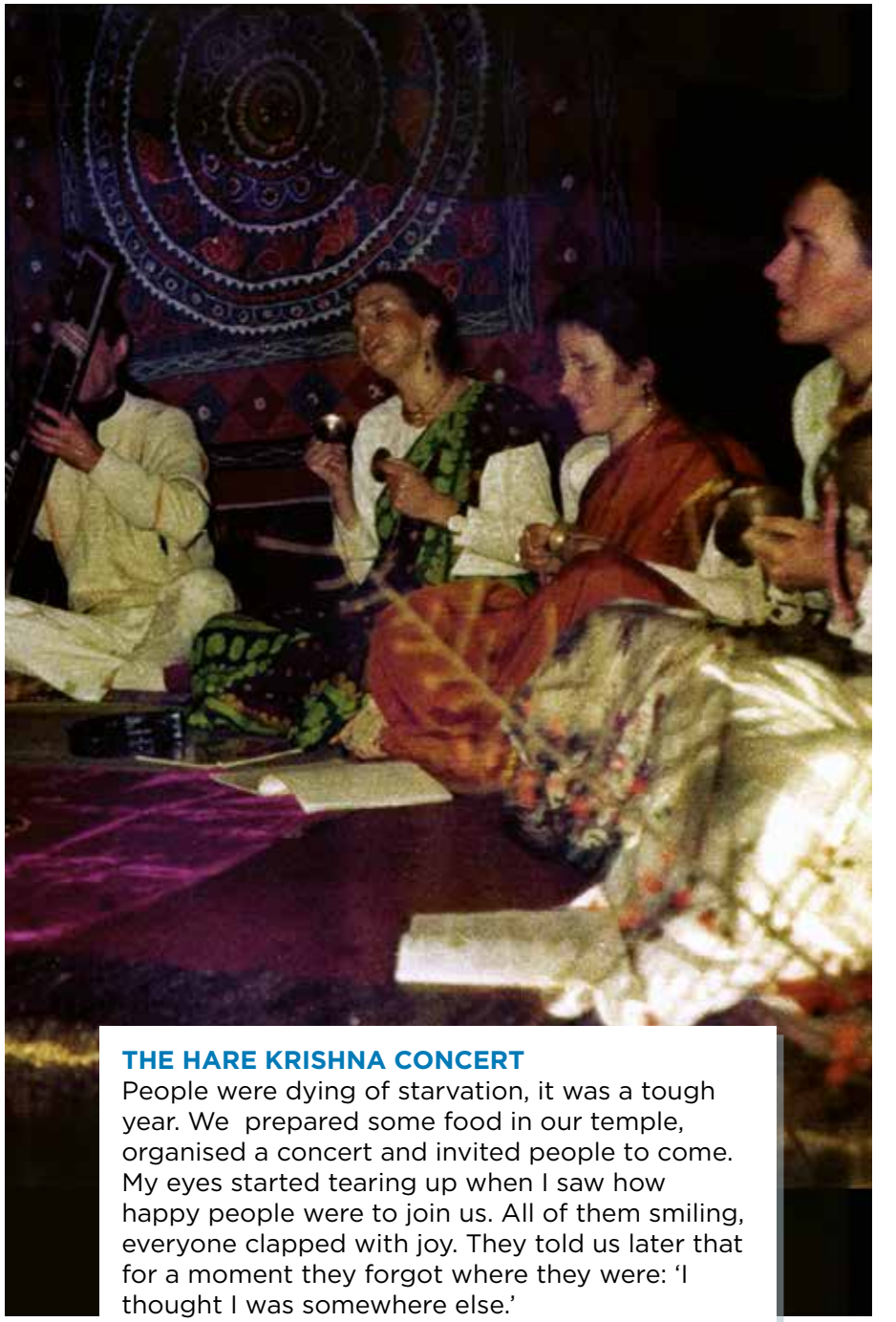
THE SCENT OF ROSES

You’re not saying you crossed *Trscanska* (Trieste Street) only because of the roses? – I was asked. That’s exactly what I’m saying – I answered. (*Trscanska* was the most dangerous street in the city, completely open to hidden snipers on the hill.)

CREATIVITY

I talked to the neighbors, with a cup of cocoa.

BALANCE



THE HARE KRISHNA CONCERT

People were dying of starvation, it was a tough year. We prepared some food in our temple, organised a concert and invited people to come. My eyes started tearing up when I saw how happy people were to join us. All of them smiling, everyone clapped with joy. They told us later that for a moment they forgot where they were: ‘I thought I was somewhere else.’

CREATIVITY

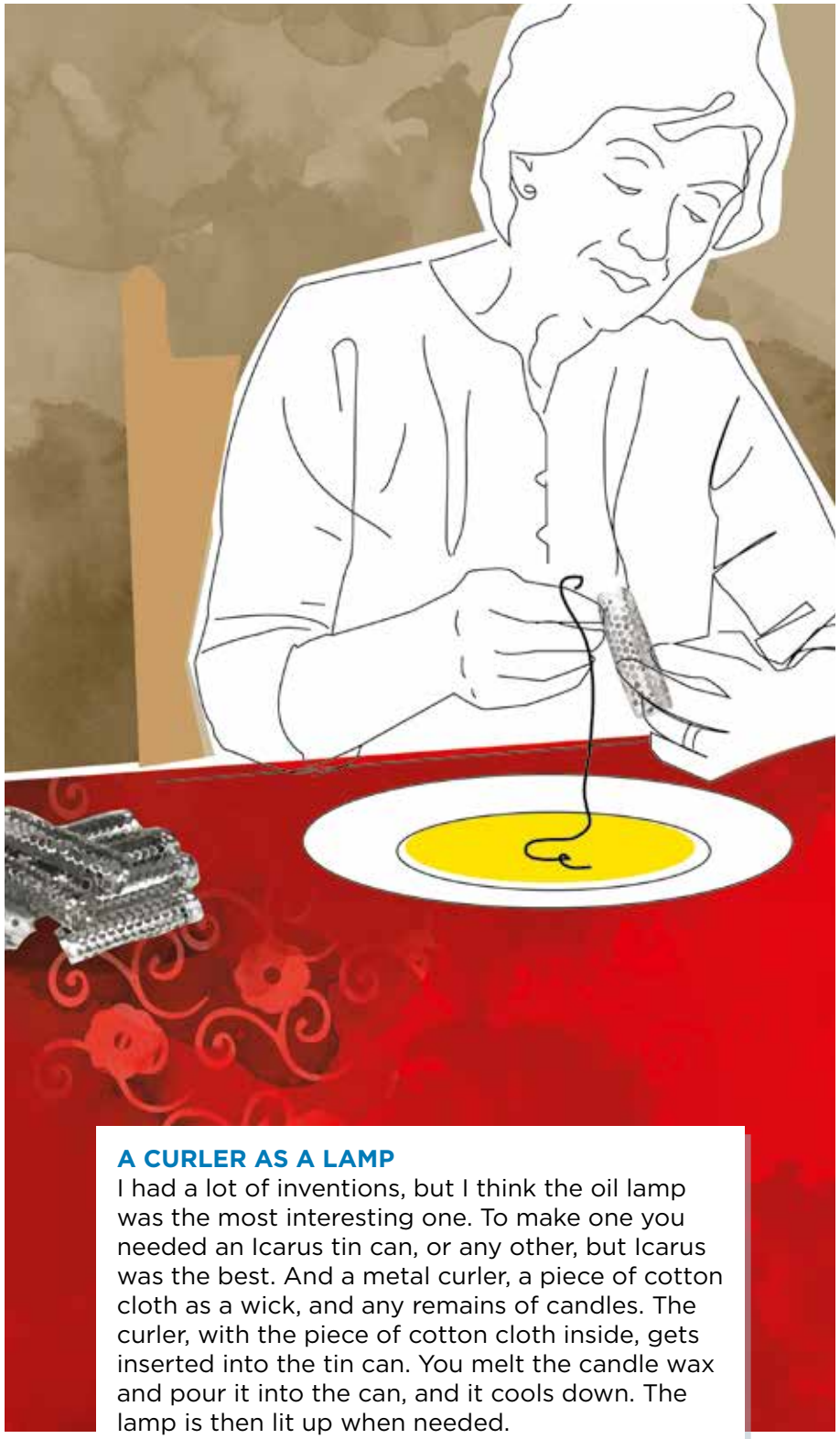
HOME FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

You can imagine the problems and the difficulty of providing water when you needed two thousand liters a day. Regardless of the shortages, the patients were never left without a meal, and no one got any disease. The staff, those of us who found themselves in this job, did everything possible for these people to feel safe, because we were there for them.

DAILY TASKS

We mainly used our free time to talk about food. You didn’t need light or electricity for discussions.

BALANCE



A CURLER AS A LAMP

I had a lot of inventions, but I think the oil lamp was the most interesting one. To make one you needed an Icarus tin can, or any other, but Icarus was the best. And a metal curler, a piece of cotton cloth as a wick, and any remains of candles. The curler, with the piece of cotton cloth inside, gets inserted into the tin can. You melt the candle wax and pour it into the can, and it cools down. The lamp is then lit up when needed.

CREATIVITY

LIGHTING

I made countless varieties of lamps to help me to move around the apartment when there was night shelling.

DAILY TASKS

I socialized with people, trying to forget about everyday life.

BALANCE

CHILDREN

Every time I passed a test at school, the paper from which I had studied was passed on to my mom for lighting a fire, and while the fire was on I'd sit by it to read and learn the next lesson, while there was still light.

DAILY TASKS

SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus appearing with presents was hard evidence of his existence: children really believed that he managed to break through the siege to bring them gifts.

CREATIVITY

In my free time I would do my neighbors' hair, I'd get a pack of cigarettes for a haircut. I was drawing throughout the war.

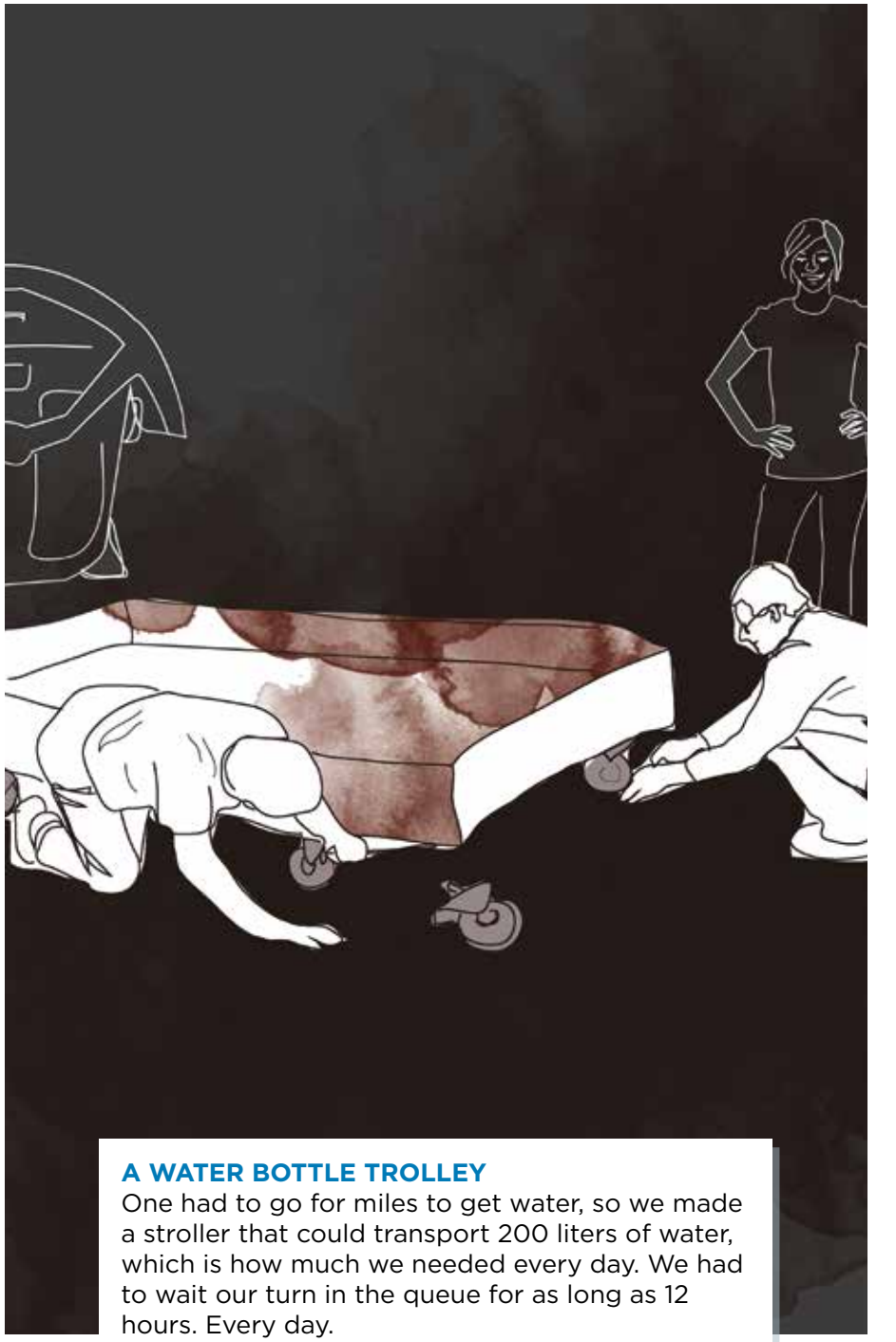
BALANCE

Kamerni teatar 55: Rock Musical *Hair*

HAIR THE MUSICAL

We rehearsed with music from a tape recorder attached to a small accumulator. The premiere was an iconic event, a great emotional valve, a sedative for the citizens of this city.

CREATIVITY



A WATER BOTTLE TROLLEY

One had to go for miles to get water, so we made a stroller that could transport 200 liters of water, which is how much we needed every day. We had to wait our turn in the queue for as long as 12 hours. Every day.

CREATIVITY

TRANSPORT

We used to ride by bicycle - we moved faster, but still had to pass the so-called dangerous points, where everybody was exposed to the sniper fire of the invisible enemy. In those moments you believed you had an advantage, since bikes passed those points faster than pedestrians. However, cyclists were often hurt as well.

DAILY TASKS

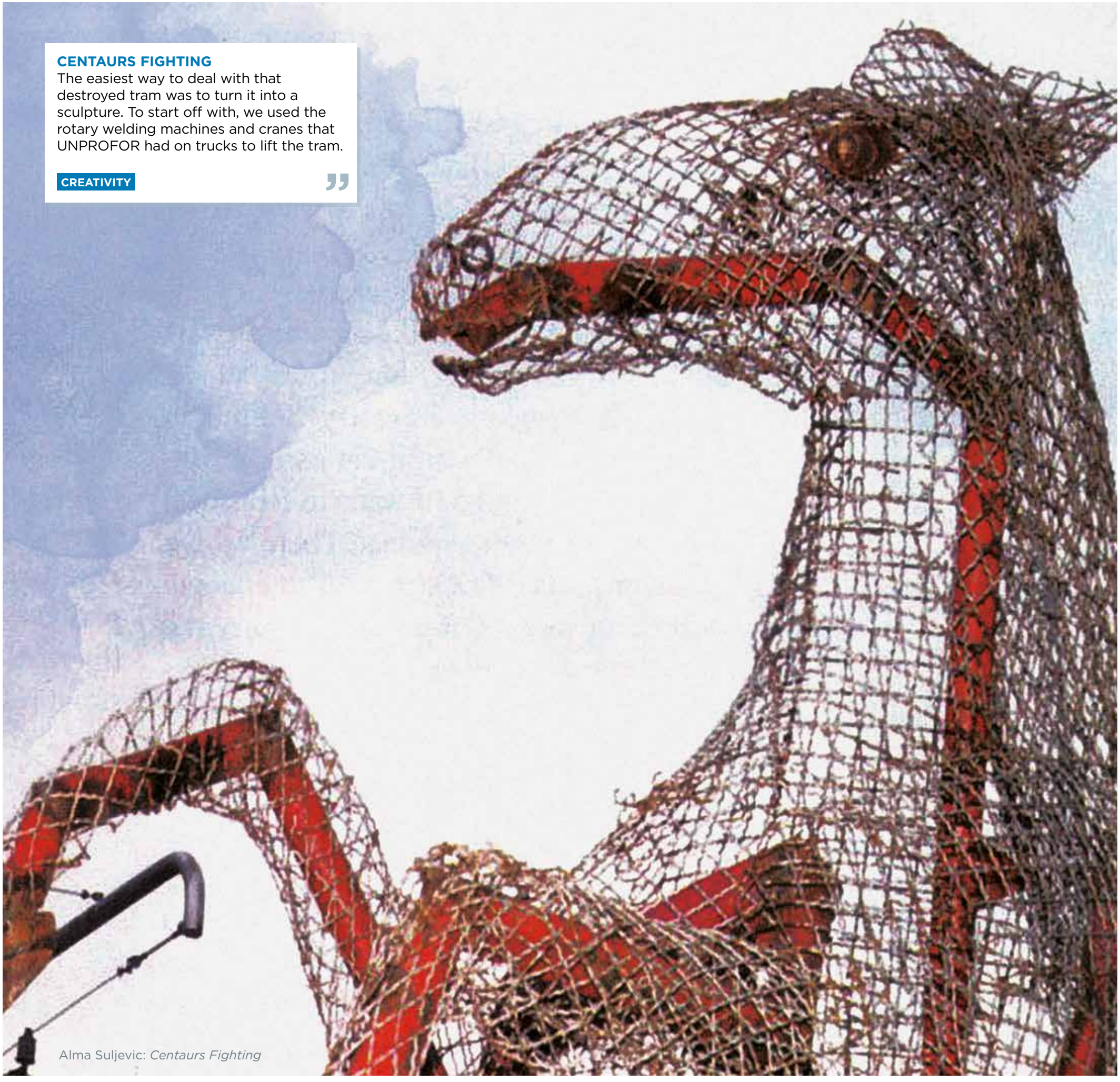
I read old novels and books, sometimes two or three times.

BALANCE

CENTAURS FIGHTING

The easiest way to deal with that destroyed tram was to turn it into a sculpture. To start off with, we used the rotary welding machines and cranes that UNPROFOR had on trucks to lift the tram.

CREATIVITY



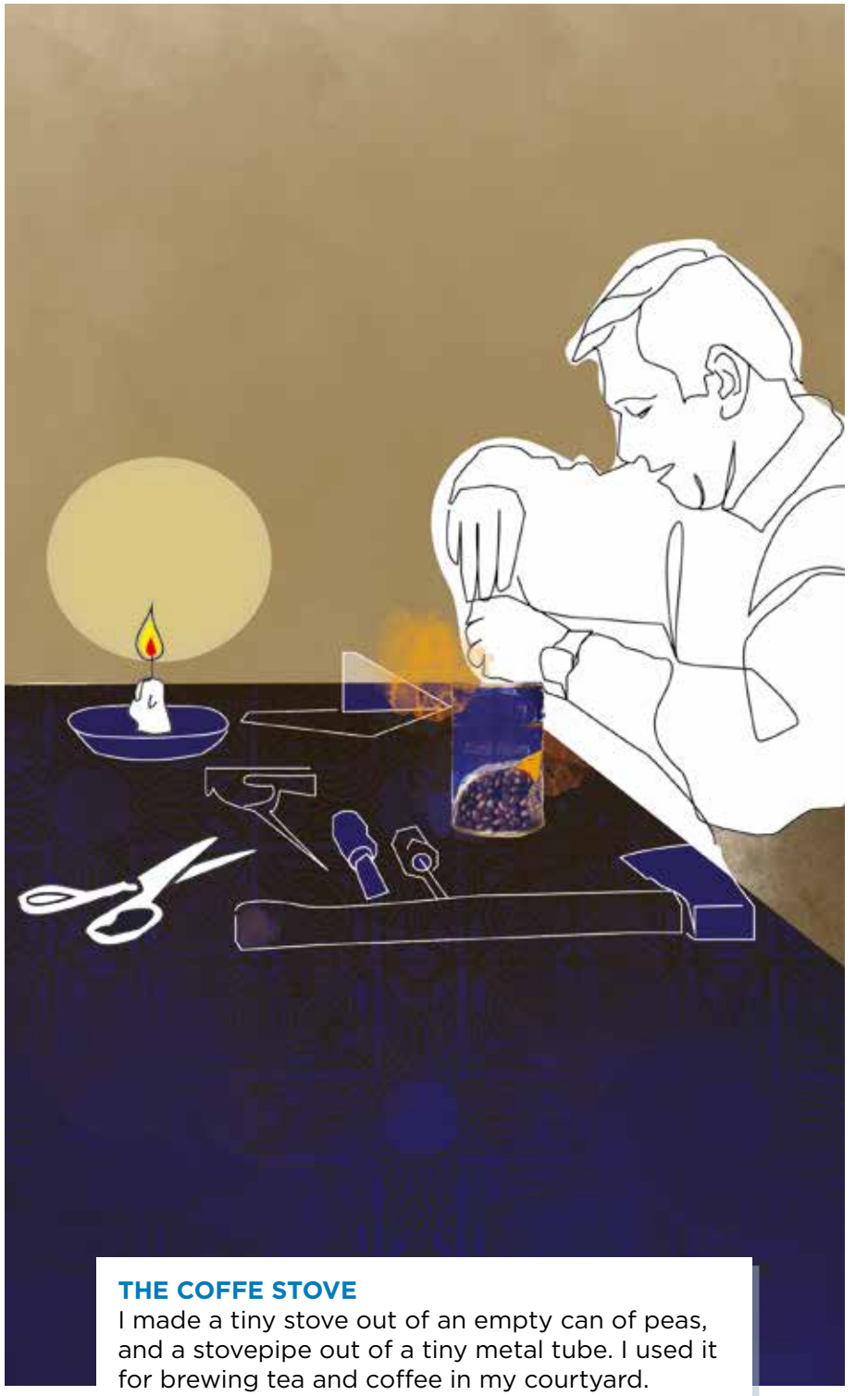
Alma Suljevic: *Centaurs Fighting*

TUNNEL

The Sarajevo Tunnel was an underground tunnel constructed between March and June of 1993 during the Siege of Sarajevo. The tunnel linked the Sarajevo neighbourhoods of Dobrinja and Butmir, allowing food, war supplies, and humanitarian aid to come into the city, and allowing people to get out.

I was more afraid to go through the tunnel then through Sarajevo, despite the shelling. A strange fear gripped me in that tunnel. So I'm sitting on this cart, on top of my suitcases, a man is pushing the cart, and I start singing, "la la la la, O sole mio, la la la"... I hear those behind me saying "Oh, Gertruda, please don't." But I continue, for I was encouraging myself that way, killing my fear, and then someone behind me says, "Gertruda, for goodness' sake, stop it now, the whole tunnel will collapse because of your voice." Then we all burst out laughing, and we laughed so much we didn't notice that we'd gone through the whole 100 meters and reached the end of the tunnel – but there was shooting outside.

CREATIVITY



THE COFFE STOVE

I made a tiny stove out of an empty can of peas, and a stovepipe out of a tiny metal tube. I used it for brewing tea and coffee in my courtyard.

CREATIVITY

COMMUNICATIONS

We communicated with the outside world via satellite phones, humanitarian organizations, radio amateurs, foreign journalists, the UN, Jehovah's Witnesses, Caritas.

DAILY TASKS

I spent it with my family, because I did not know if I'd survive the next day.

BALANCE

I used to get up at 7 in the morning to play basketball. At the same time I was waiting to get some water from the pump.

BALANCE

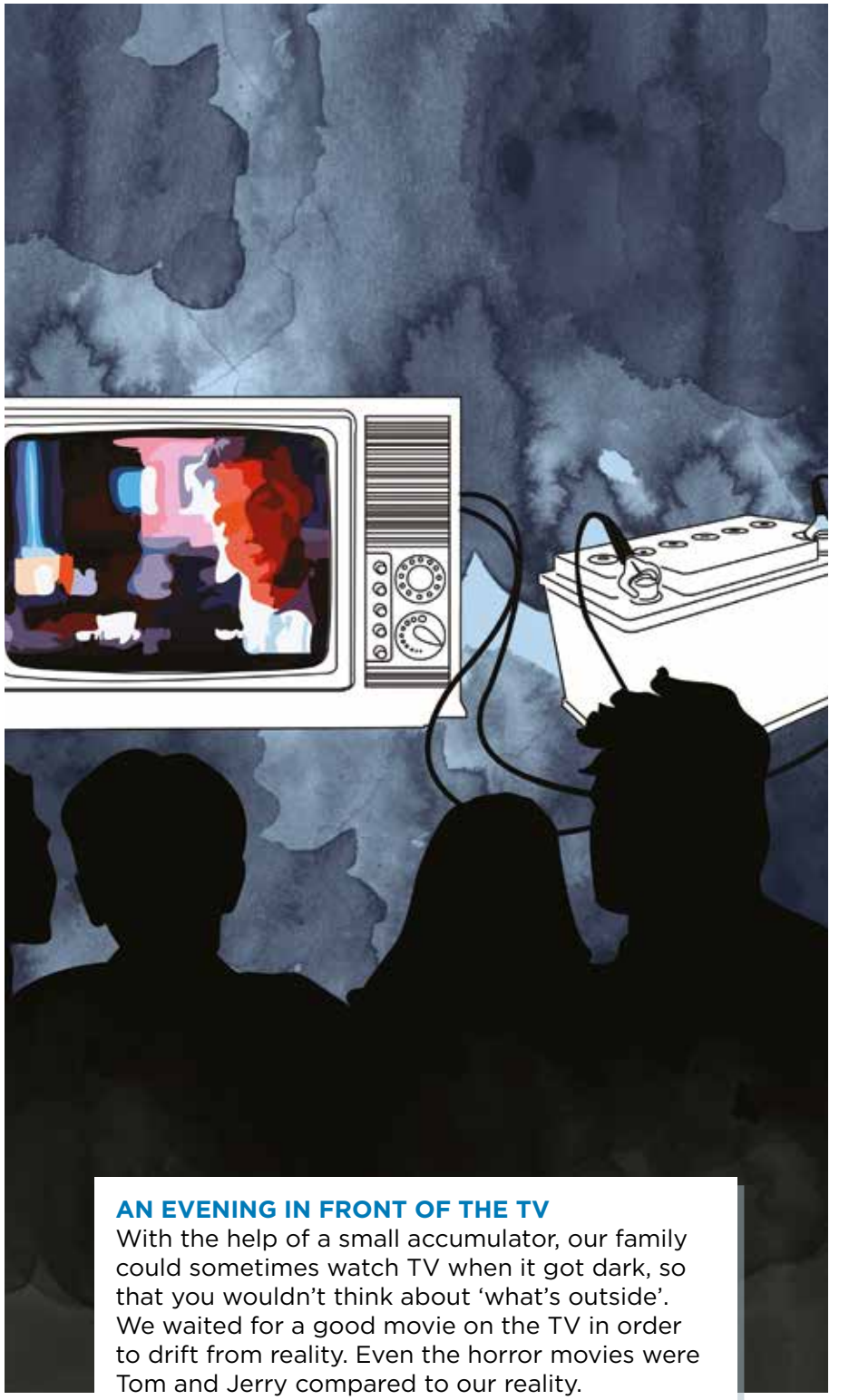
MOVING AROUND
I moved around the city in order to find food and water. There was no place where you could be safe from shelling and sniper fire.

DAILY TASKS

WAITING FOR GODOT
The play *Waiting for Godot* starts with ‘There’s nothing we can do’. We did, however, manage to do something, despite the circumstances. We didn’t manage to get some of the props until almost the last day before the first performance - carrots and some other things, like a chicken to put in the picnic basket.

CREATIVITY

Waiting for Godot, directed by Susan Sontag



AN EVENING IN FRONT OF THE TV
With the help of a small accumulator, our family could sometimes watch TV when it got dark, so that you wouldn’t think about ‘what’s outside’. We waited for a good movie on the TV in order to drift from reality. Even the horror movies were Tom and Jerry compared to our reality.

CREATIVITY

RADIO
I made a radio and connected it to my bicycle dynamo with a piece of wire. I pedaled - producing electricity and listening to the radio.

DAILY TASKS

Since I lost 20kg, I redesigned my old clothes.

BALANCE

SEWING MACHINE

A Singer sewing machine saved us. It didn't need anything, no electricity, no oil, just me and my own strength and my sewing skill. What I sewed I bartered with neighbors for humanitarian aid items.

CREATIVITY

RECIPES

I would invent recipes. One of them was for bean pie. Boil the beans well, add some onion and pepper if you've got any, and mash all that together and spread it over filo pastry sheets. Then you bake it; it's a real specialty.

DAILY TASKS

My friends and I would party for no reason, just to relax. We used truck batteries to listen to the music.

BALANCE

A Man Flying Above the River by Enes Sivac

A MAN FLYING ABOVE THE RIVER

At the time we couldn't prevent the destruction of the city, but there was some kind of resistance: we maintained at least the city's spiritual pulse. If we had let this city's spirit die, then the city would have been truly dead.

CREATIVITY

FOOD
I saw a fish, a trout, and didn't dare tell my fellow fishermen. I went home, even though snipers were shooting along the river. I got my equipment, but I had no bait so I had to find an earthworm... and I caught the trout with it! What a joy it was!

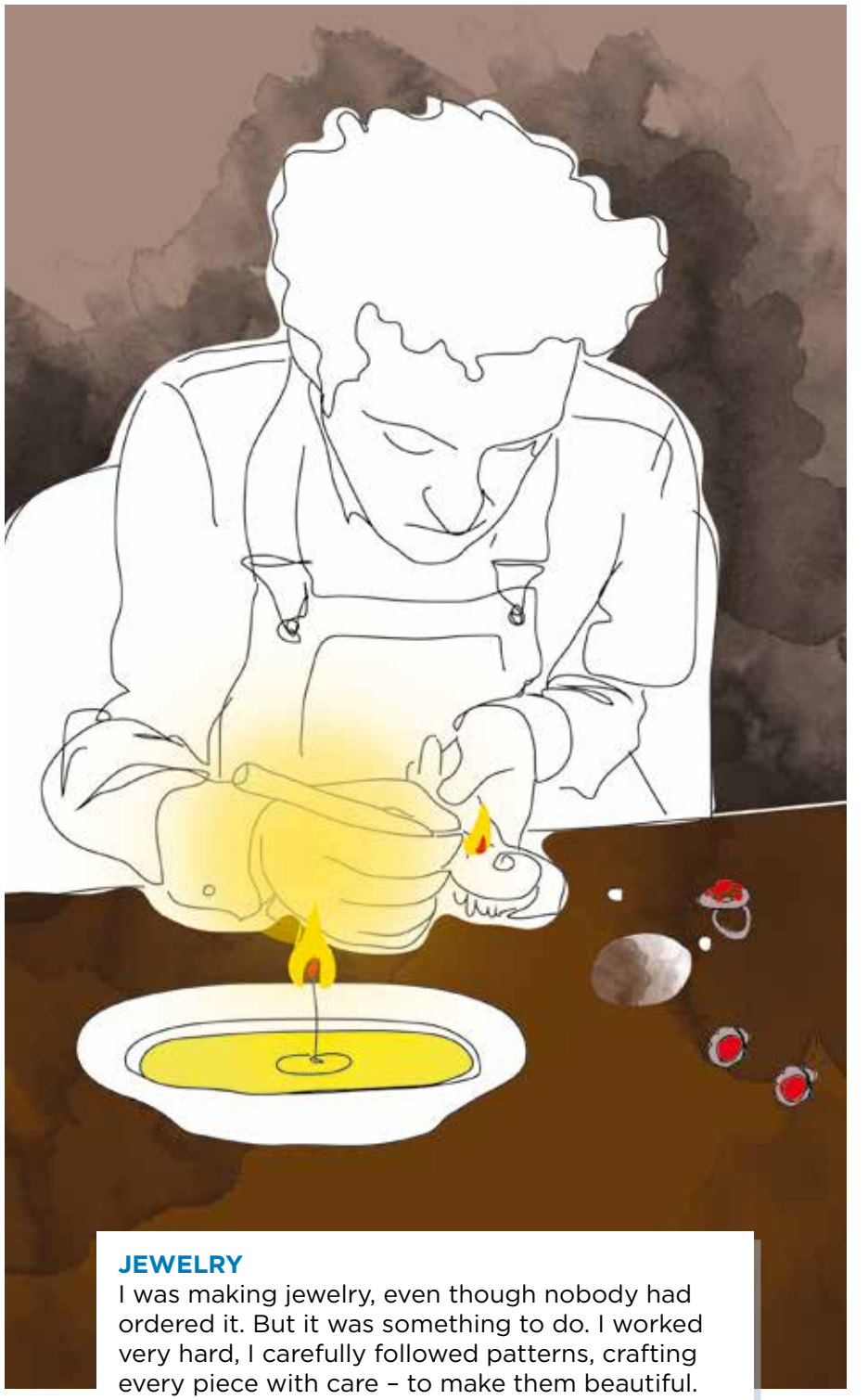
DAILY TASKS

PETS
My neighbor had a cat, and she shared her own food with it. A friend of mine had parrots; he used to feed them bird seeds. He would barter a box of cigarettes for a box of bird food, he could not let them starve. Thanks to the vaccines we brought in through the tunnel, we were able to vaccinate the dogs.

CREATIVITY

I used to cross streets running 300 kilometers per hour.

BALANCE



JEWELRY
I was making jewelry, even though nobody had ordered it. But it was something to do. I worked very hard, I carefully followed patterns, crafting every piece with care – to make them beautiful.

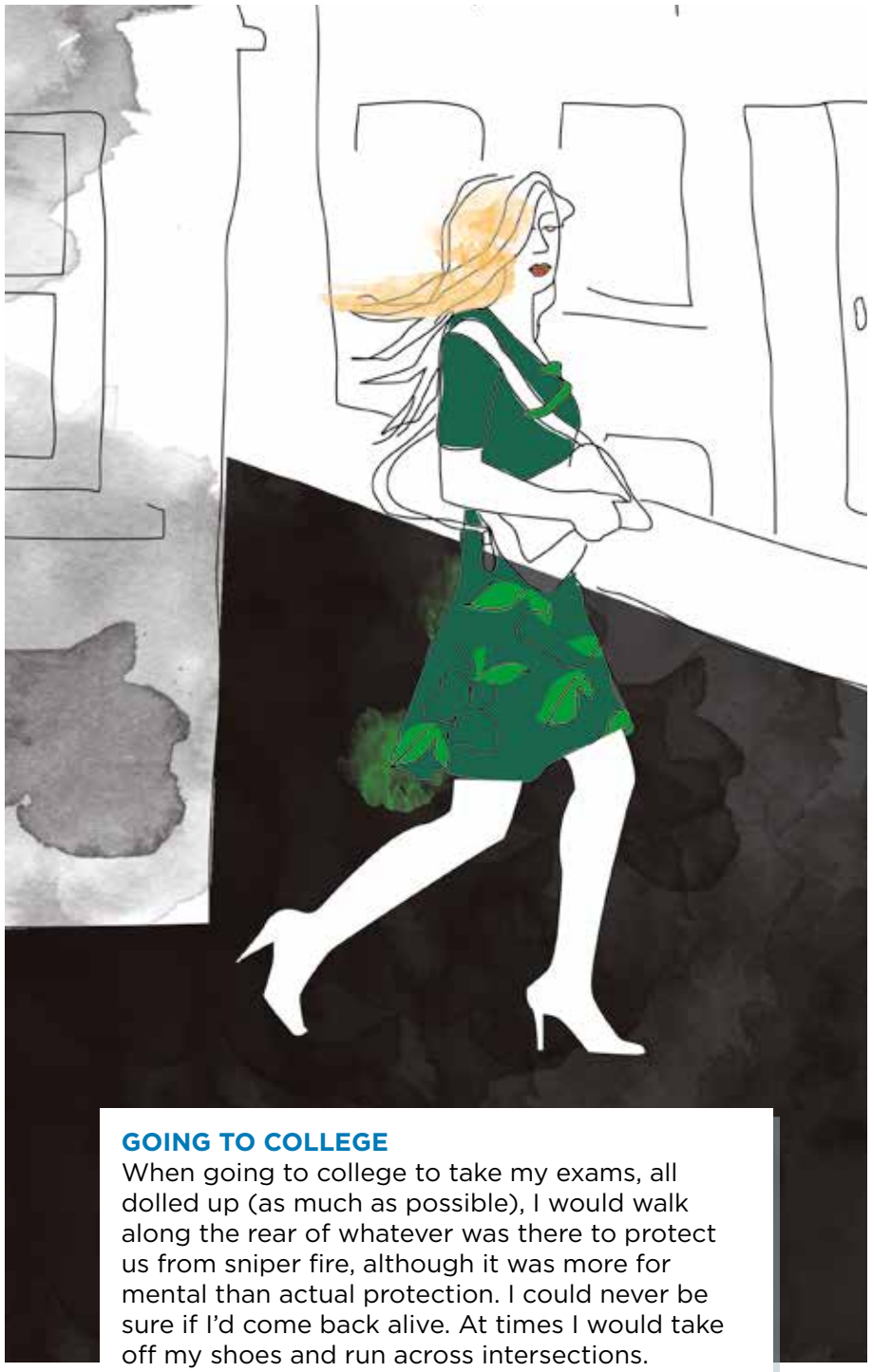
CREATIVITY

INVENTIONS
I made a small cooking stove. I took a big tin can, and in it I placed a smaller one filled with water. I lit some paper in the larger can and the flame heated the water and food in the smaller can.

DAILY TASKS

I went to several weddings. Each time we had great fun.

BALANCE



GOING TO COLLEGE

When going to college to take my exams, all dolled up (as much as possible), I would walk along the rear of whatever was there to protect us from sniper fire, although it was more for mental than actual protection. I could never be sure if I'd come back alive. At times I would take off my shoes and run across intersections.

CREATIVITY

PETS

Despite the shelling, exhibitors brought their dogs; some poodles even had bows, like in the best of times. People were amazed when I told them to feed their dogs brewer's yeast as a supplement. They thought the yeast would make the dogs swell. A dog is not bread, the yeast cannot make it swell.

DAILY TASKS

In my spare time I read old magazines, before I burned them to make fire.

BALANCE

Design by Rijad Ljutovic
Photograph: Milomir Kovacevic

'TRASH' FASHION SHOW

You could tell that those dresses brought out of mothballs were beautiful, and those young girls looked beautiful in them. The fashion show was actually cheerful: although shells were falling all around, the atmosphere was nice. There were torches instead of electric light, or reflectors.

CREATIVITY

BLUE
Although I never complained, during the third year of the siege I felt a tremendous need to see the sea. Whatever I looked at appeared to be blue. To console me, my friend Edo, a painter, painted Blue.

CREATIVITY

Blue by Edin Numankadic

A THEATER SPOTLIGHT STOVE
Milenko made a stove out of a theater spotlight; it heated the apartment during the four years of the siege.

CREATIVITY

GLOVES

Barter was my way to survive. I used to knit gloves from colorful wool vests and barter them for food or cigarettes. Once a neighbor told me that an elderly lady bartered a pint of brandy for his ‘Nostradamus Prophecies’. He was thrilled with the exchange, he thought he had done very well out of it. He couldn’t wait to get home and relax with the help of that brandy – one needed it given all the problems and everything we lived through. However, passing through the market-place, and knowing that there was no flour at home, he asked a dealer: ‘Would you barter flour for cognac?’ The dealer gave him six kilos of flour for the cognac. He said he suffered a lot that night, but survival came first.

CREATIVITY

I did crosswords with a pencil – then I would rub them out and do them all over again.

BALANCE

MOUSETRAP

I made a mousetrap out of a cardboard box. I caught 23 mice.

DAILY TASKS

TWIGS AS FIREWOOD

I get up in the morning, I hear a chainsaw sound coming from the hill, and I run towards it, believe it or not, into the forest, and when a big tree falls, there’s an invasion of people, attacking the tree. I take what’s left, just a few twigs, I was happy even with that, but if I got branches, it was a big bonus. I’d use ropes to tie up a bundle of branches and carry them home on my back, something to survive on, and I’d use the twigs first when cooking, to make the branches last as long as possible.

CREATIVITY

FOOD

I made an alfalfa salad – believe me, I have never had a tastier salad in my life. Two or three days after people realized it could be used as human food, alfalfa was no longer to be found anywhere in Sarajevo.

DAILY TASKS

In my free time I would go out with a friend, just for the sake of not forgetting old habits.

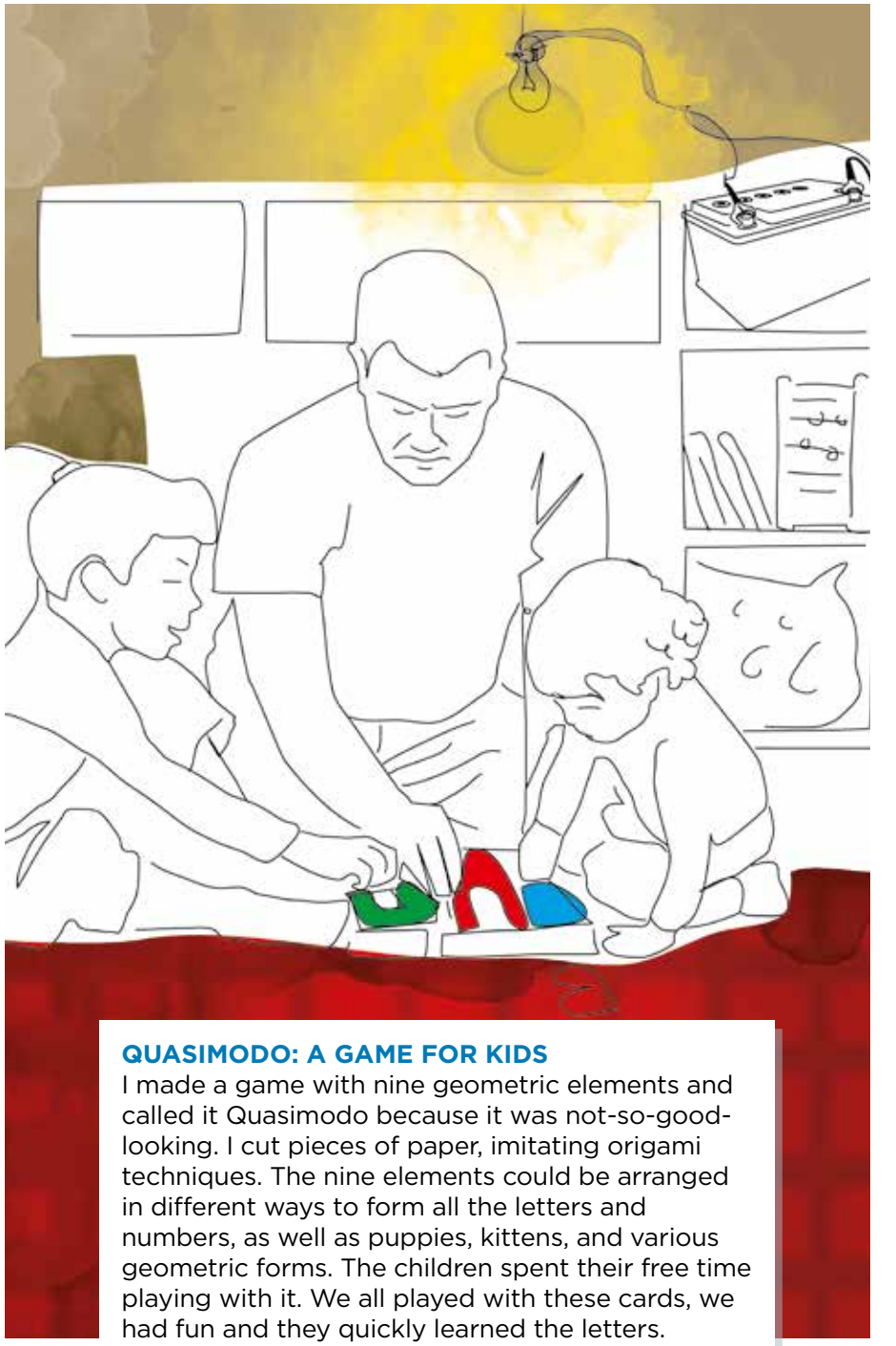
BALANCE

‘ALL I NEED IS LOVE’

I made a female nude with meat pie and baklava. I forced my mother to make meat pie and baklava for the exhibition, although exhibiting these without eating them was pure luxury at the time.

CREATIVITY

All I Need Is Love by Amra Zulfikarpasic



QUASIMODO: A GAME FOR KIDS

I made a game with nine geometric elements and called it Quasimodo because it was not-so-good-looking. I cut pieces of paper, imitating origami techniques. The nine elements could be arranged in different ways to form all the letters and numbers, as well as puppies, kittens, and various geometric forms. The children spent their free time playing with it. We all played with these cards, we had fun and they quickly learned the letters.

CREATIVITY

PETS

One day there was no way I could make my dog leave the building, which made me angry and annoyed. But there was a good reason for his behavior, which became obvious when the shelling started a few seconds afterwards. From then on, none of my neighbors went out without previously checking if my dog was willing to go.

DAILY TASKS

I knitted woolen socks and slippers, talked to my neighbors, took care of the house, all that was everyday free time.

BALANCE

WATER DOWSING

We survived thanks to the survival instinct. As there was no water, and we needed it, we drank rainwater. Then I used a dowsing rod to find water around our house and I did find it – three meters deep. It was a great joy.

CREATIVITY

COFFEE

I used to make grain coffee; usually from barley, but once I used lentils. I also tried rice and acorns.

DAILY TASKS

I'm a magician. I would practice magic tricks.

BALANCE

SARAJEVO 'LIFE'

We were photo-shooting the cover for our look-alike edition of LIFE magazine; the original LIFE magazine edition from 1936 had Elizabeth Taylor on the front page. We had Amra at -26°C and we had to dress her in several layers so that she could survive this photo-shoot, and we could print the look-alike LIFE magazine in order to show everyone the way people in Sarajevo live under the siege, and the way they think. All our interviewees had to answer whether they would come back, and in which form, if there were reincarnation. They all replied that they would, and that they would like to come back as human beings. They said that, even though it was the fourth year of the siege and the winter was very harsh.

CREATIVITY

SURVIVAL GARDENS

After the Soros Foundation donated 16,000 bags of garden seeds, Sarajevo became one large garden of survival. Every patch of soil was used for gardening, be it on a window sill or balcony or behind a house. We produced seedlings in every available dish. We can guarantee the survival of any household with 100 square meters to sow potatoes - and maybe a goat to boot!

CREATIVITY

In my free time I engaged in farming, in pots. It was very calming.

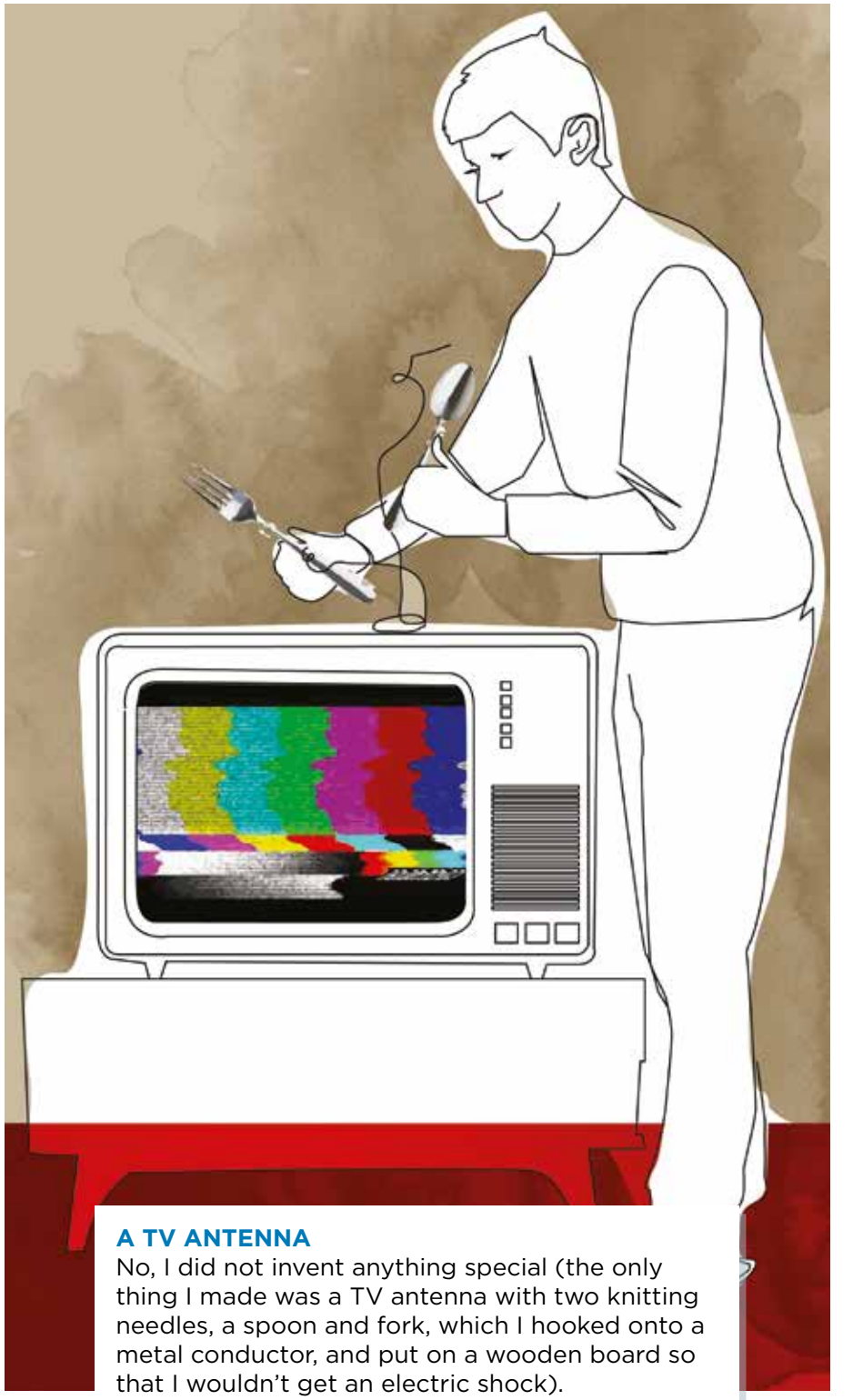
BALANCE

SNIPER
I stand between the buildings and watch the clock. After the first shot, I count the seconds to the next. Approximately 15 to 20 seconds. When I feel I'm ready, I wait for the next shot and start running across the avenue: had to cross it in 15 seconds. Fear is fantastic: you stop feeling your legs, your muscles stop working, there is no air in your lungs.

DAILY TASKS

KNITTING
I would knit in the dark so I wouldn't think about the war.

CREATIVITY



A TV ANTENNA
No, I did not invent anything special (the only thing I made was a TV antenna with two knitting needles, a spoon and fork, which I hooked onto a metal conductor, and put on a wooden board so that I wouldn't get an electric shock).

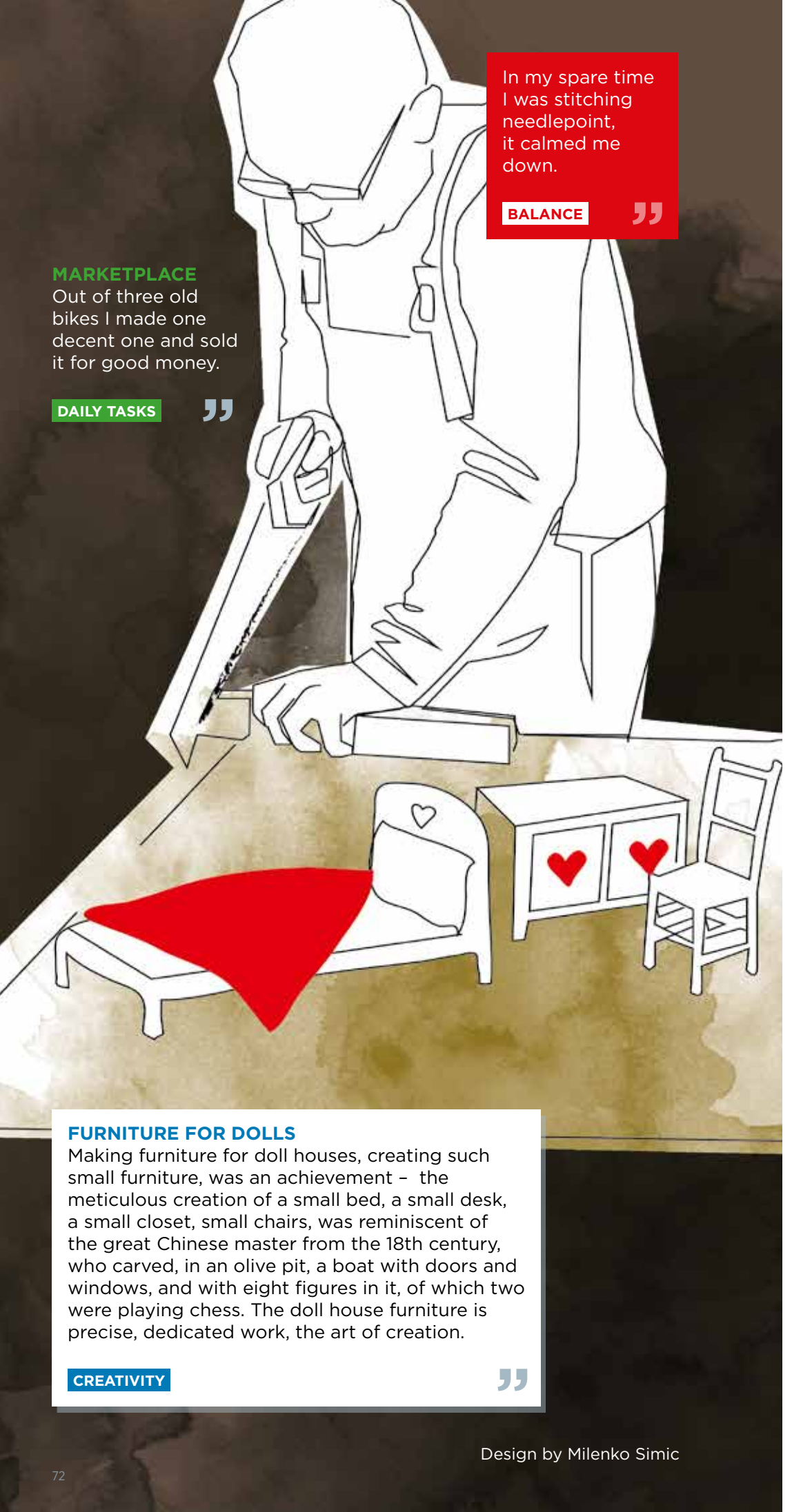
CREATIVITY

WEDDING
I got married during the war. My husband's friends paid for a (two-day) honeymoon trip at the Sarajevo Holiday Inn. It was awesome and I will never forget it.

DAILY TASKS

I made toys in my free time; I've now been doing this for 10 years and earn my living this way.

BALANCE



In my spare time I was stitching needlepoint, it calmed me down.

BALANCE

MARKETPLACE
Out of three old bikes I made one decent one and sold it for good money.

DAILY TASKS

FURNITURE FOR DOLLS
Making furniture for doll houses, creating such small furniture, was an achievement – the meticulous creation of a small bed, a small desk, a small closet, small chairs, was reminiscent of the great Chinese master from the 18th century, who carved, in an olive pit, a boat with doors and windows, and with eight figures in it, of which two were playing chess. The doll house furniture is precise, dedicated work, the art of creation.

CREATIVITY

Design by Milenko Simic

National Theater: *Moliere*

MOLIERE
Vladimir Jokanovic, an actor, said: I once had to stand before the audience in a freezing cold theater and say something like “Given the low temperature here, do you want us to perform - or not?” Believe me, no one left, they all said, “Please do”.

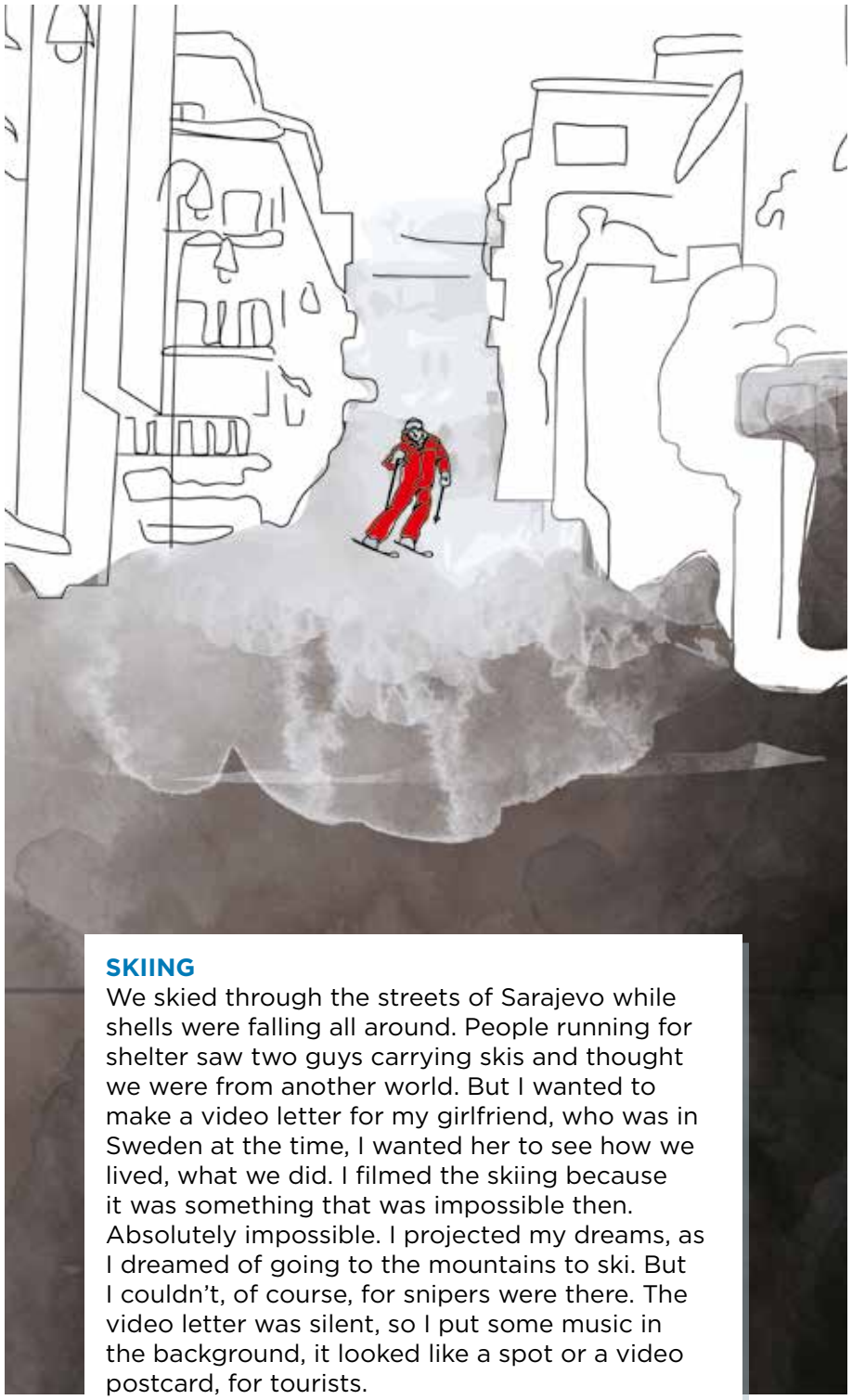
CREATIVITY

‘TRASH’ FASHION SHOW

Design by Rijad Ljutovic
Photograph: Milomir Kovacevic

Design by Rijad Ljutovic
Photograph: Milomir Kovacevic

‘TRASH’ FASHION SHOW



SKIING
We skied through the streets of Sarajevo while shells were falling all around. People running for shelter saw two guys carrying skis and thought we were from another world. But I wanted to make a video letter for my girlfriend, who was in Sweden at the time, I wanted her to see how we lived, what we did. I filmed the skiing because it was something that was impossible then. Absolutely impossible. I projected my dreams, as I dreamed of going to the mountains to ski. But I couldn't, of course, for snipers were there. The video letter was silent, so I put some music in the background, it looked like a spot or a video postcard, for tourists.

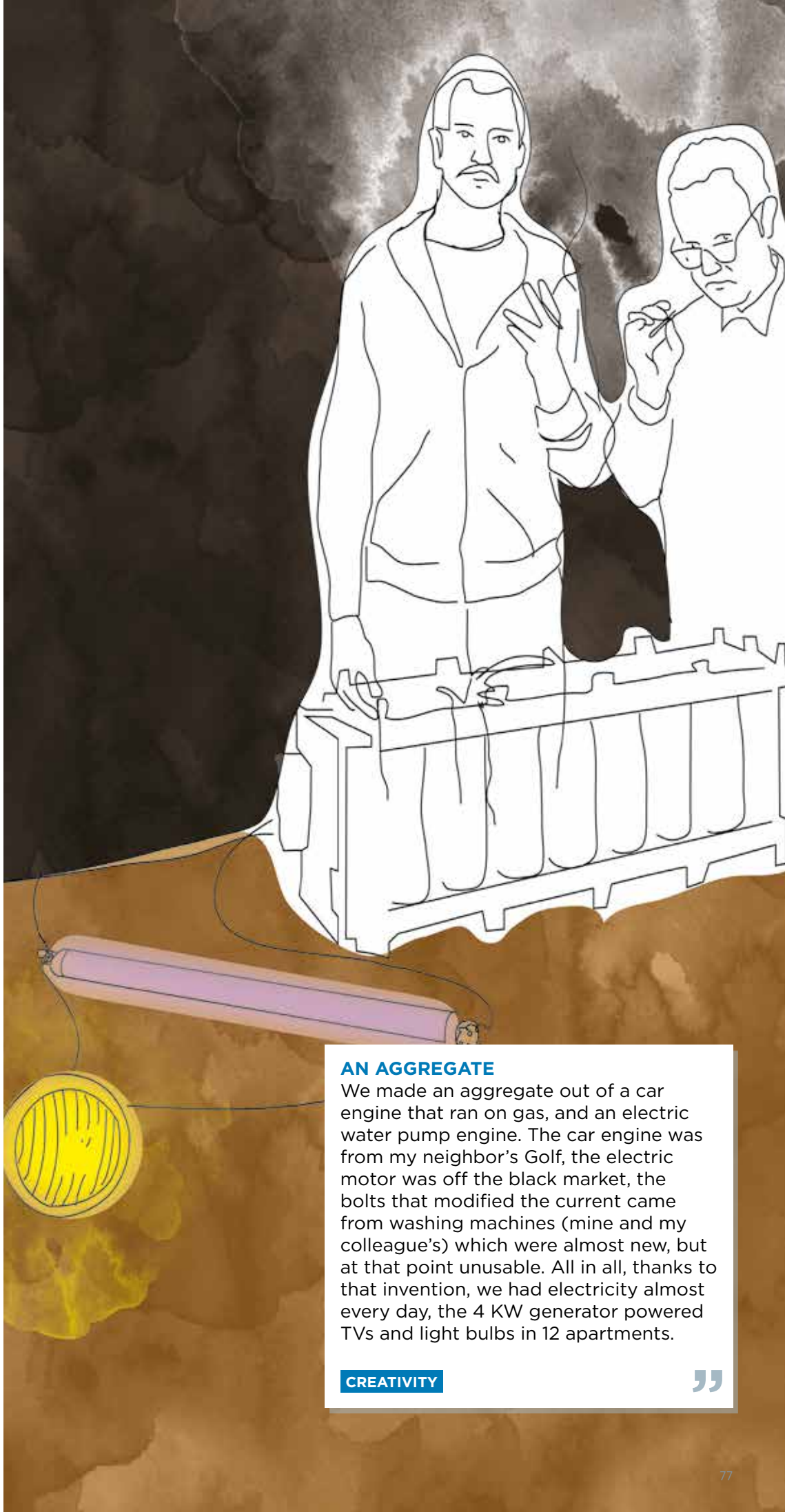
CREATIVITY

RECIPES
To make sarma you can use any kind of leaves, which you roll around a filling usually based on meat, but if there is no meat then you do it without meat; if you have no pepper, then without pepper.

DAILY TASKS

In my spare time I trained in basketball.

BALANCE



AN AGGREGATE
We made an aggregate out of a car engine that ran on gas, and an electric water pump engine. The car engine was from my neighbor's Golf, the electric motor was off the black market, the bolts that modified the current came from washing machines (mine and my colleague's) which were almost new, but at that point unusable. All in all, thanks to that invention, we had electricity almost every day, the 4 KW generator powered TVs and light bulbs in 12 apartments.

CREATIVITY

In my spare time I wrote poems.

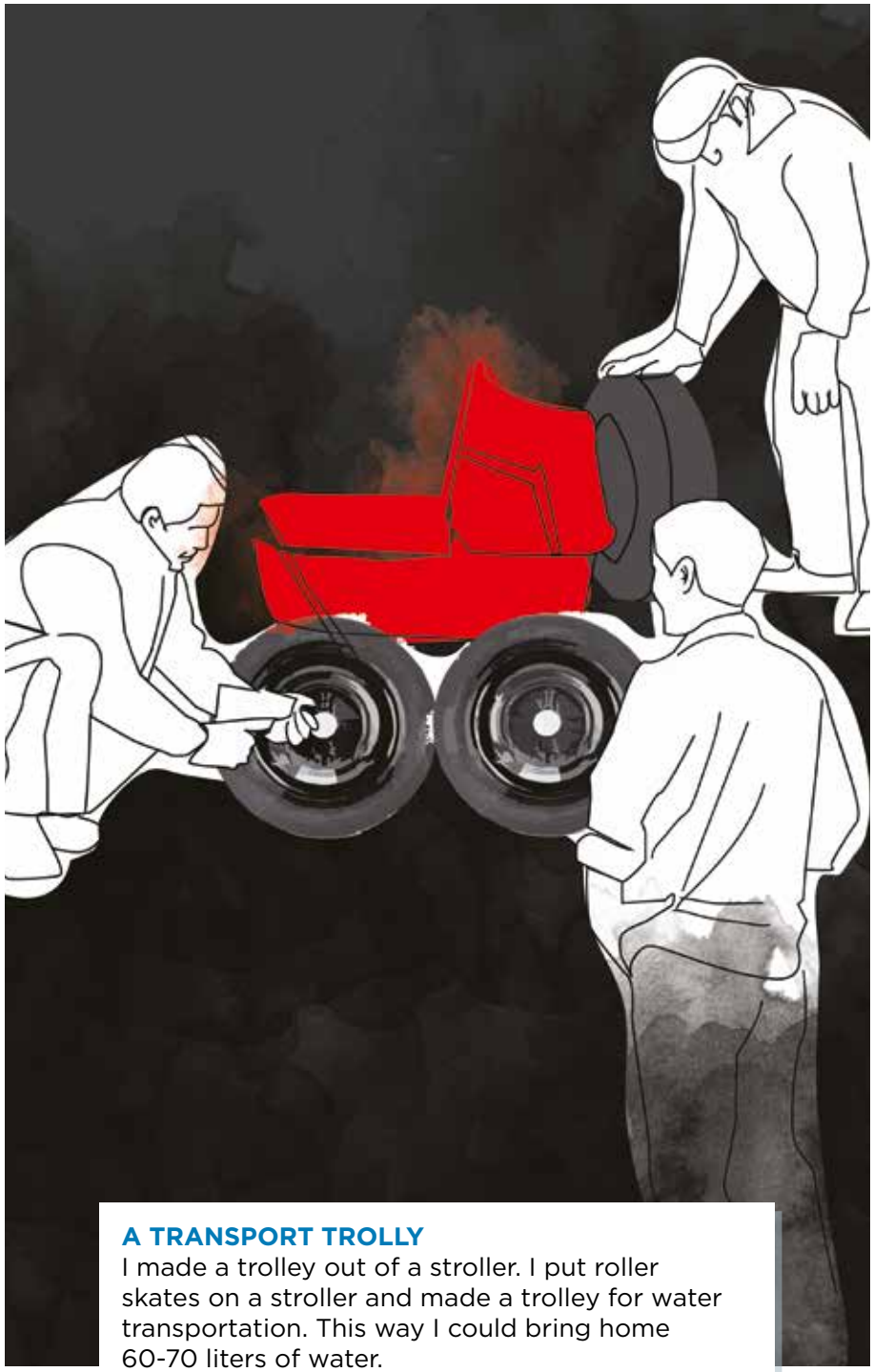
BALANCE

BASEMENT
We didn't have a real basement; when there was shelling we sat in the staircase. I even slept there a few times, seated on a stair.

DAILY TASKS

HAZNADAREVIC FURNITURE
I could immediately tell if I could use a board to make furniture; I used many boards that dove cots or chicken coops were made of. I made a whole walnut furniture set, buying the material from five different sites. This particular set was designed in the shape of leaves. And I managed to drag one complete set through the tunnel and export it to the USA. It was a bit strange at the time; grenades exploding, all the killings, everything falling apart, and then a commercial: Haznadarević company manufactures furniture in Sarajevo. So it was known that 'Haznadarević' not only stayed there but was manufacturing furniture. And even exporting it to America! Through the tunnel!

CREATIVITY



A TRANSPORT TROLLY
I made a trolley out of a stroller. I put roller skates on a stroller and made a trolley for water transportation. This way I could bring home 60-70 liters of water.

CREATIVITY

RECIPES
We were very careful with bread, making sure that everyone got at least the minimum needed to deceive hunger; but if we didn't eat all the bread we had during the day, we'd use the leftovers to prepare a specialty: cevapcici made of bread crumbs. All Bosnians love cevapcici.

DAILY TASKS

The most important feat is that I stayed in one piece, and I graduated from university.

BALANCE

MASEQUERADE

We organized a children's masquerade in our stairwell. I could not bear to see the children playing in the street where often there was shelling, so I gathered them at my place, to perform *Romeo and Juliet*. Try to imagine those children: Romeo was 11 and Juliet 10.

CREATIVITY

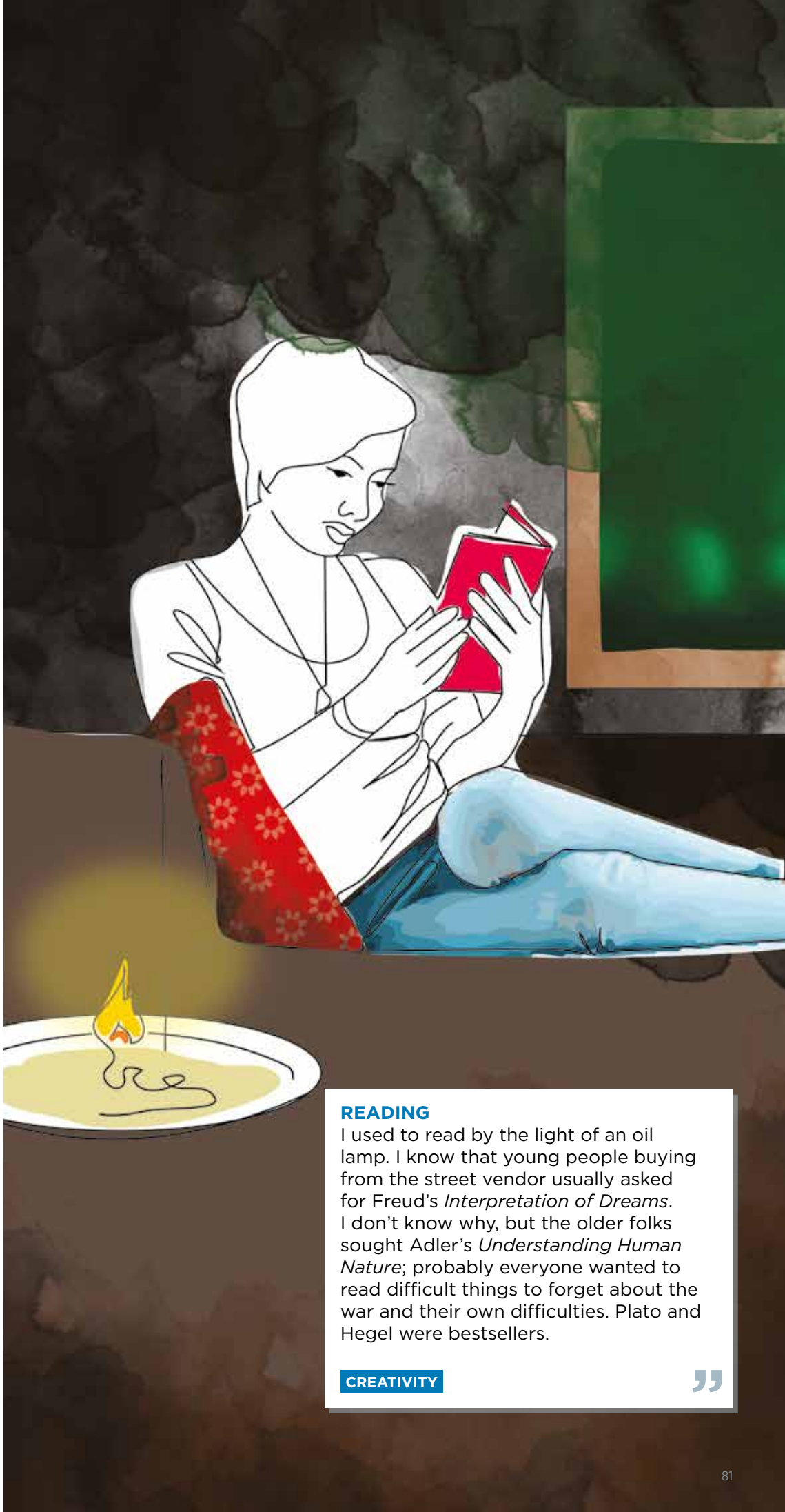
WATER

So once I got a fever in the evening, which meant I could not go to fetch water. But during the night I wrapped my feet in cold vinegar packs and the fever was gone. My wife said "I'm afraid to go on my own" and so, with vinegar packs and all, I put my children's big shoes on and went with her to fetch water.

DAILY TASKS

I waited until late at night for the gas supply to be turned on so that I could work on my doctorate.

BALANCE



READING

I used to read by the light of an oil lamp. I know that young people buying from the street vendor usually asked for Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. I don't know why, but the older folks sought Adler's *Understanding Human Nature*; probably everyone wanted to read difficult things to forget about the war and their own difficulties. Plato and Hegel were bestsellers.

CREATIVITY

We use to make puppet shows on our staircase.

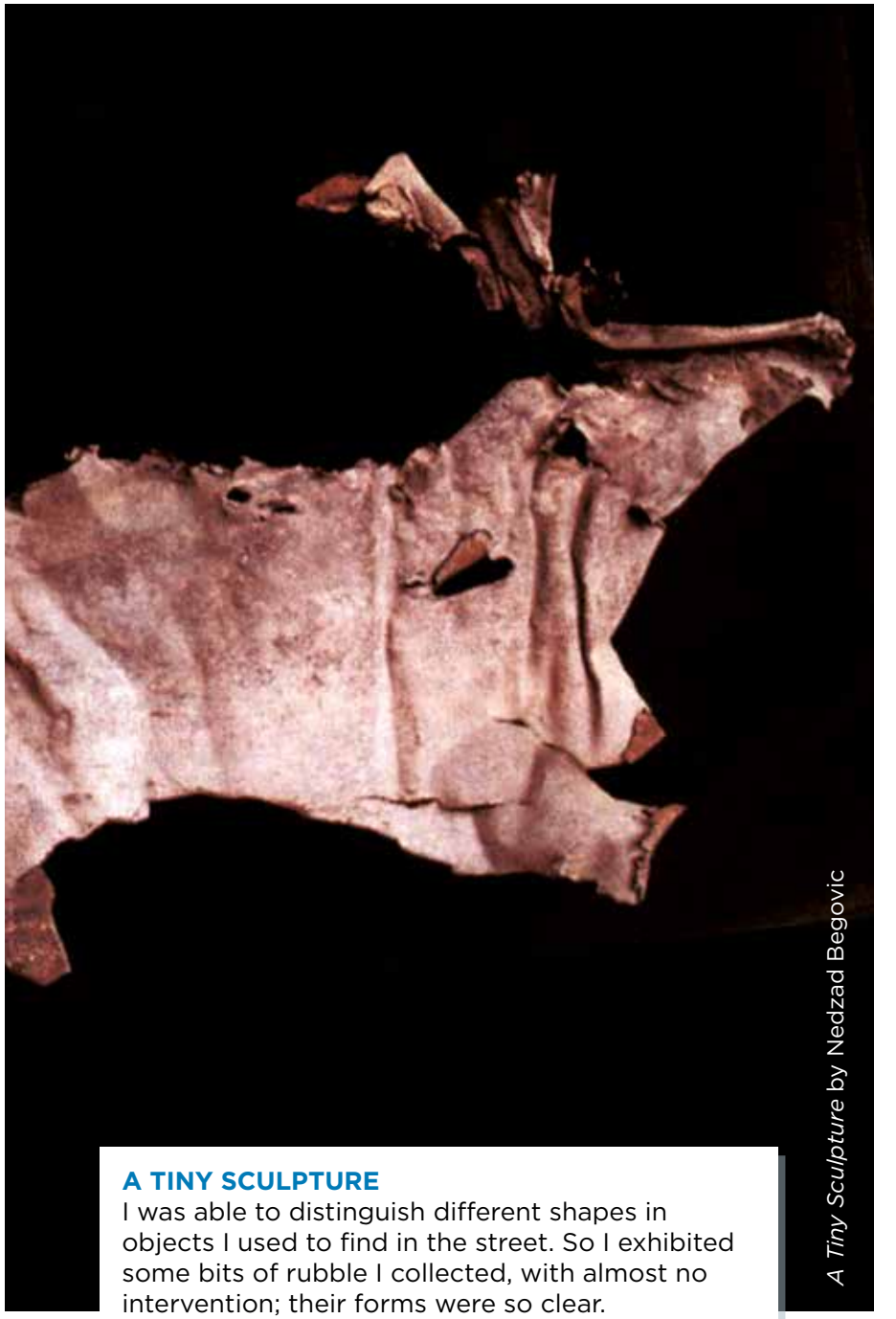
BALANCE

BREAD
When the French president Mitterrand arrived in Sarajevo, he brought a plastic bag with 2-3 kg of yeast, and he promised to the French peacekeeping forces that France would send us larger amounts of dry yeast at the earliest opportunity. Seven days later the first delivery of dry yeast arrived in Sarajevo.

DAILY TASKS

A WELL
We dug a well. I found water at three meters. It was a great joy.

CREATIVITY



A Tiny Sculpture by Nedzad Begovic

A TINY SCULPTURE
I was able to distinguish different shapes in objects I used to find in the street. So I exhibited some bits of rubble I collected, with almost no intervention; their forms were so clear.

CREATIVITY

SCHOOL
At the end of each class our teachers would tell us: 'Be careful.' We greeted them with 'How are you?' There was no 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' any more. Even greetings totally changed. We didn't all have to rise when the teachers entered the classroom, because they respected us as much as we respected them; we all lived in the same hell, and there was no need to be too formal.

DAILY TASKS

I worked so much and I was so tired – physically and mentally – that sleep was the best medicine.

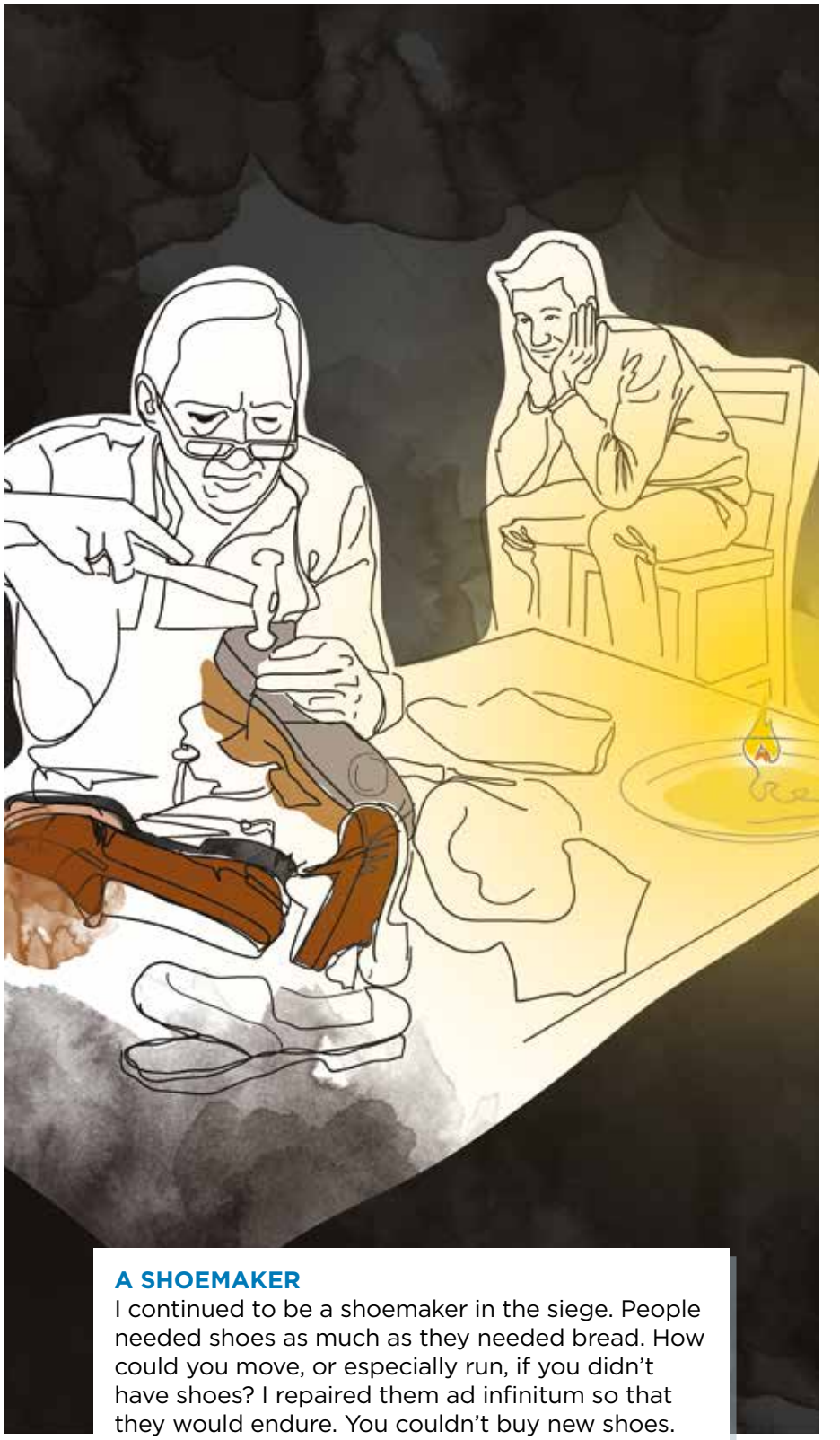
BALANCE

FAMA
international
SARAJEVO
SPRING 1994
newsletter
NUMBER 1
Cultural Survival
»Zid« means »Wall« and »Radio Sarajevo Wall« was founded by a leader of »alternative« Sarajevo called Zdravko Grebo. Grebo's »International Manifesto« of Radio Zid, written in English, is one of the more original documents to emerge from any war.
Dear Friend,
You must have seen more than once the images of devastated and massacred Bosnia-Herzegovina, and among these the singularly horrifying images of Sarajevo. But what could not be recognized in those images was the slaughtering of the civic spirit and culture of the country's urban parts. The demolished buildings, collapsed bridges and other edifices will be restored more easily than the urban spirit and the one of civilization that has been created over the centuries.
Deeply aware of such grave reality, "Zid" in Sarajevo has started a media project that is primarily a mission of cultural and spiritual renewal. That project is a local (FM) radio station ("Urban Radio") whose *spiritus movens* is striving for democratic principles, spirit of tolerance, civic norms of behavior. This Sarajevo identity is in crisis today, as is everything else to that matter.
Why the name "Radio Sarajevo Zid"? Not long ago, there was a town devided by the wall. The wall was toppled down and the millions around the globe thought that the world had made a step closer to Utopia. Then the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina started. Sarajevo is not devided by a wall, Sarajevo is divaded by hatred. Nationalistic fanaticism and madness emanated by people that have never been Sarajevans, who have never been citizens. The whole city, together with other Bosnian-Herzegovinian towns, has become a wall. The wall in front of which the conscience and morale of the world's mighty ones is stopped, unable to get over it.
As an independent radio station, Radio Sarajevo Zid shall have a defined autonomous political attitude. It will not come from any ideology, dogma, party codex. It will not be a mere instrument of a holy scripture to the disobedient reality. The political attitude will be the attitude of common sense, of social sagacity based on basic European idea of rationalism and urban mentality.....And last but not least, that spirit is trying to preserve sense of humor.
Zdravko Grebo

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

When FAMA printed its first newsletter, no one could believe that the news from Sarajevo was cultural survival. And then they realized that people were organizing exhibitions, performances, giving concerts, making fashion collections – as a way of defeating the fear of death. Culture is a basic need, as well as bread and water.

CREATIVITY



A SHOEMAKER

I continued to be a shoemaker in the siege. People needed shoes as much as they needed bread. How could you move, or especially run, if you didn't have shoes? I repaired them ad infinitum so that they would endure. You couldn't buy new shoes.

CREATIVITY

TIPS

I isolated myself from the media and the news in order to maintain high motivation.

DAILY TASKS

My son played tennis – in the basement, of course.

BALANCE

FRIENDSHIP
We had a dog with whom we shared our food rations.

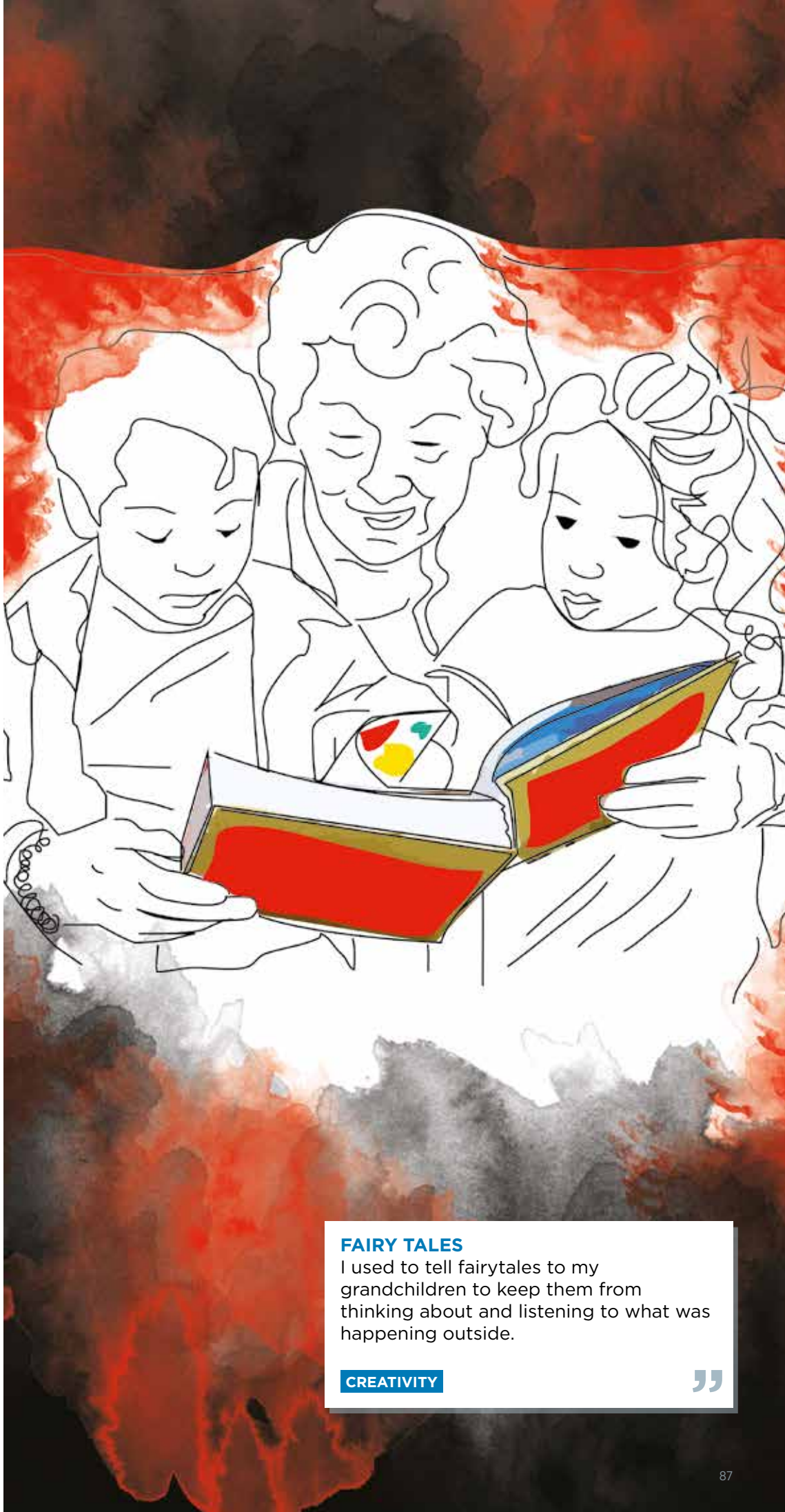
CREATIVITY

TRAM
What happened was, as everyone knows, that they were shooting, shelling or sniper targeting passengers in trams. The trams could not drive along so-called ‘sniper alley’, but we insisted on carrying on with all the regular activities of life as much as possible, to make people feel that they were alive despite it all, and not locked up in a cage.

DAILY TASKS

I repaired TV sets in people’s houses. That was often needed as TV sets often broke down because of the unstable electric current and frequent electricity cuts.

BALANCE



FAIRY TALES
I used to tell fairytales to my grandchildren to keep them from thinking about and listening to what was happening outside.

CREATIVITY

GARDENING TIPS

Water your garden early in the morning or very late at night, for two reasons. The soil is cooler at that time, and everyone knows that it's dangerous to water it during the day. We can sow chard, whose leaves will be picked in successive leaf harvests during the entire spring. We can sow spinach, which will be picked in the early spring. We can sow corn salad which is gathered during the entire fall.

CREATIVITY

CURRENCIES

In the marketplace the currencies were cigarettes, DM, pounds sterling, vouchers, BH dinars, commodities... the US dollar was weak. But cigarettes were the only currency to maintain their value during the whole siege of Sarajevo. The DM went up and down, the dollar and our dinar significantly dropped against other currencies, but a cigarette was the only currency for which you could always get the right equivalent (cigarettes for flour, sugar). Later on, you could barter gold for any product, even though there were only a few people who wanted to take gold, because gold did not guarantee personal survival, so everybody preferred to take cigarettes or cash in any currency.

CREATIVITY

INVENTIONS

I made shoe polish.

DAILY TASKS

I have no other tip but: all you need is work.

BALANCE

THE NEW MODERN
I wore tights and sneakers so I could move faster and run.

CREATIVITY

CULTURE
It was easy to figure out the meaning of life and death. Alcestis is a play about exactly that. Alcestis is a woman willing to sacrifice herself and die instead of her husband. We've all been in similar situations: shall I go to get some water and let my husband stay at home this time, or my children, or whoever. In a way we were all willing to sacrifice ourselves.

DAILY TASKS

I spent it reading because that relaxed me and made me forget everyday life.

BALANCE

RAIN WATER
I used to take water from a stream, bringing it home on my back, in jerry cans, walking for five kilometers. There was never enough water. I washed my hair with rainwater, that way it stayed shiny for a long time.

CREATIVITY

THE DAILY PAPER
What did it mean to work in the basement of *Oslobodjenje*? It meant sitting in the semi darkness with an oil lamp, 10 or so of us gathered around a cold heater waiting for the night to come, for the generator to be turned on – as fuel was saved for printing the newspaper, even if only a two-sheet edition; we knew that in the morning citizens would be waiting for it in the streets: one could grow as hungry for news as for food.

CREATIVITY

SCHOOL
It was extremely cold. Students would bring bags of firewood, one log at a time, and we'd collect enough for two or three fires – enough to take the edge off the cold air in the classroom, as otherwise it wasn't possible to work in there. Students would come to school between shelling.

DAILY TASKS

I had a lot of free time, and used to hang out with some new pals.

BALANCE

MUSHROOMS
I grew mushrooms in the basement. And I used to make a bean dessert. Once beans are cooked well you mash them up using a hand mixer or a spoon. Then you add some sugar and later sprinkle some cocoa from a humanitarian Lunch Box. It looked like chestnut puree.

CREATIVITY

DEFIANCE
I used to put on make up – just out of spite.

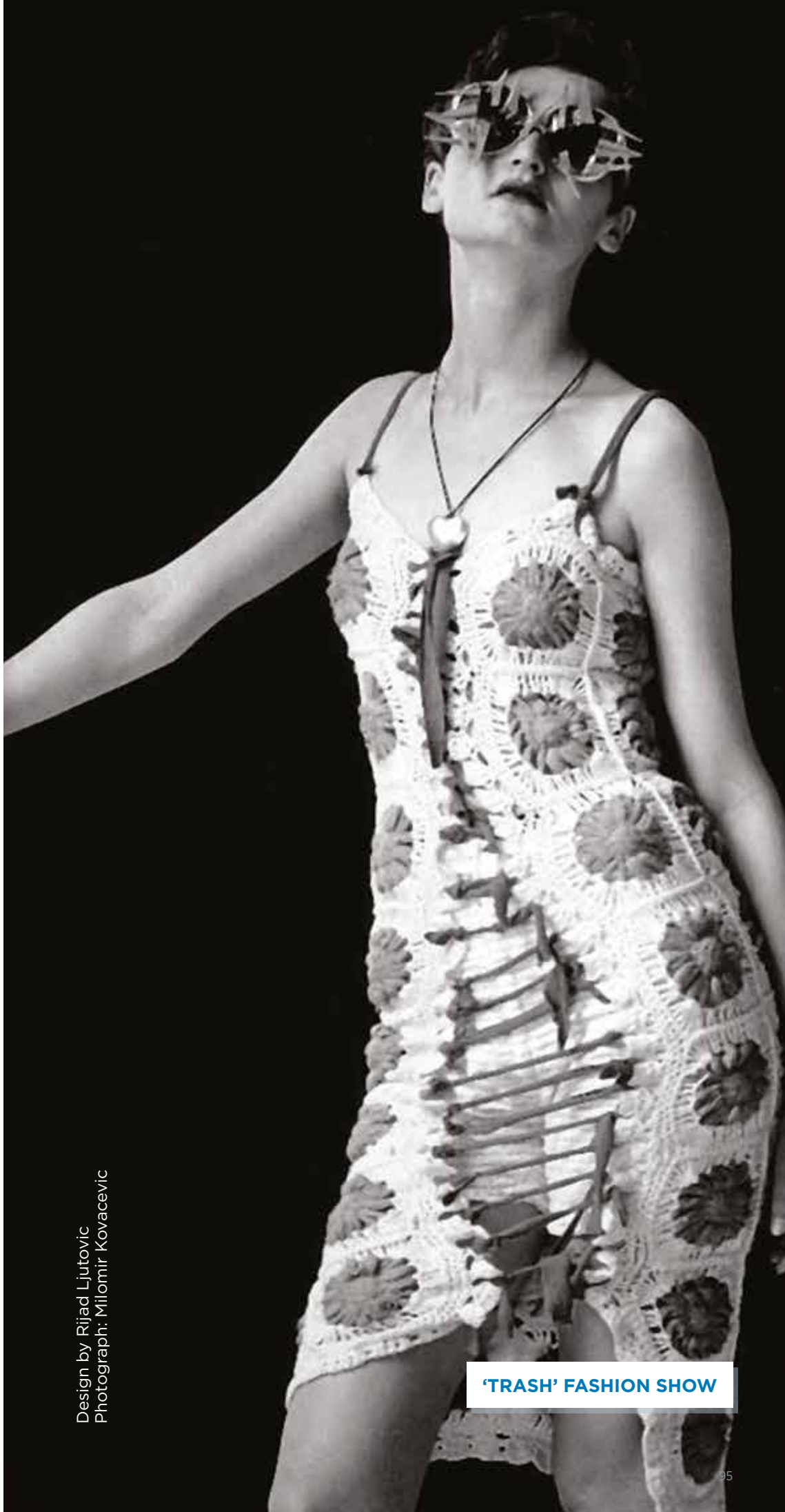
CREATIVITY

FEAR
I did my best to hide my fear of death but it was noticeable, nevertheless. I was aware that everybody who knew me noticed it, but whatever happened - gunfire and the war – in every possible way I tried not to show my fear of dying.

DAILY TASKS

I played cards, chess and dominoes with my neighbors and friends.

BALANCE



Design by Rijad Ljutovic
Photograph: Milomir Kovacevic

‘TRASH’ FASHION SHOW

BABY BOOTIES
My mother used to knit baby booties. We did not know any babies, but we kept bringing her every piece of wool thread we could find. She'd immerse herself so totally into making the finest and softest baby booties that she wouldn't think about the shells falling on our balcony.

CREATIVITY

DRUMMER
I used to make *hard hitting drum sounds*, trying to be louder than the noise of the demolition of the city. No one ever complained.

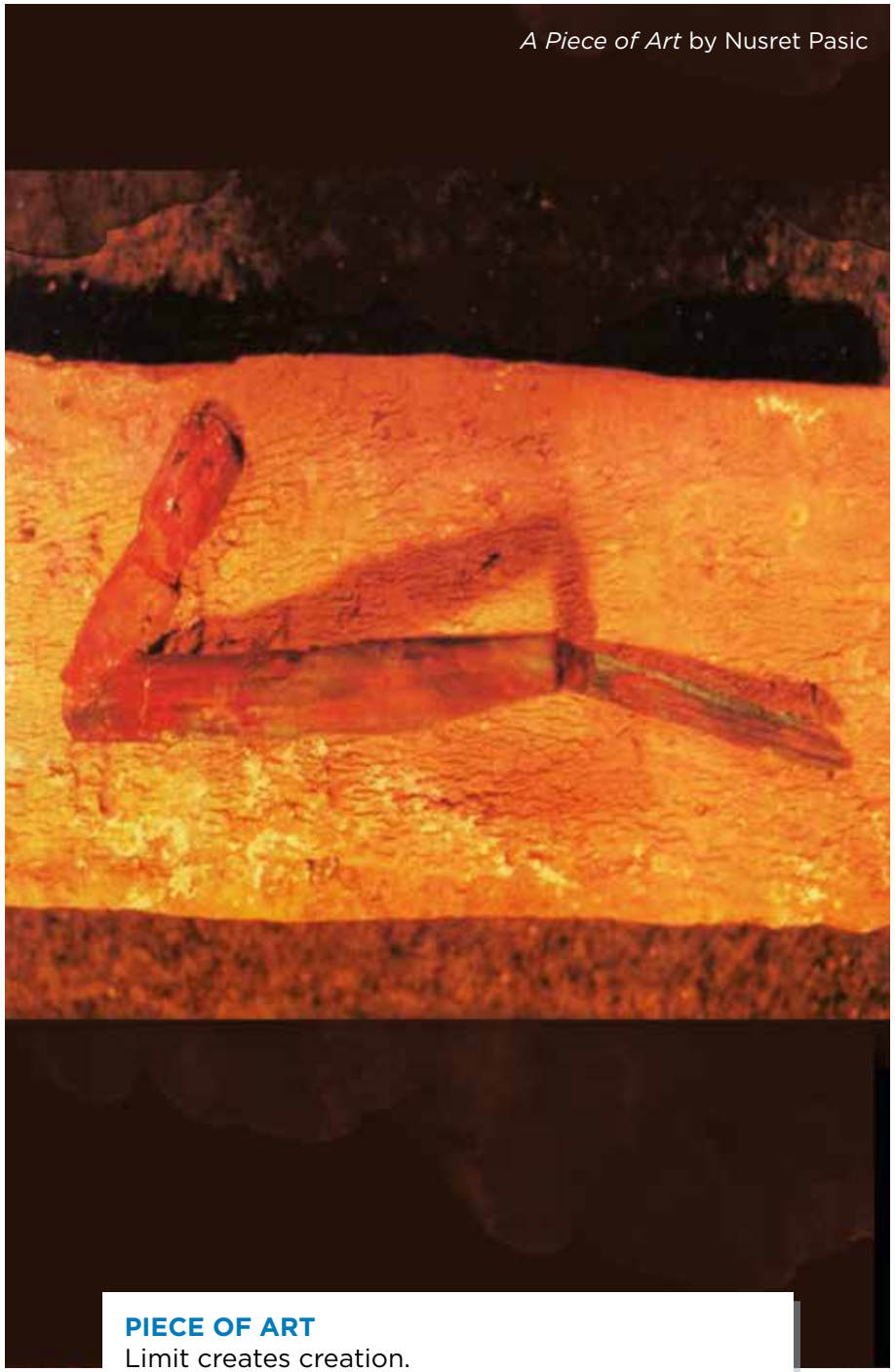
CREATIVITY

PARTIES
There was no electricity at the time, so we guys from school pedaled a bike all day to fill up an accumulator. The girls made cookies, and one of them brought a bottle of champagne her father had been saving for her graduation ceremony.

DAILY TASKS

I walked around the city, mostly because I would have gone crazy locked in the house the whole time.

BALANCE



A Piece of Art by Nusret Pasic

PIECE OF ART
Limit creates creation.

CREATIVITY

HOSPITAL
When we came on duty, we used to bring some water, or a log - everyone brought whatever they could. That was the only way; we would put those logs in the oven to dry a little bit, but also to warm them up so that we could hold them to warm our hands; we didn't want to touch patients with such cold hands, especially the young children.

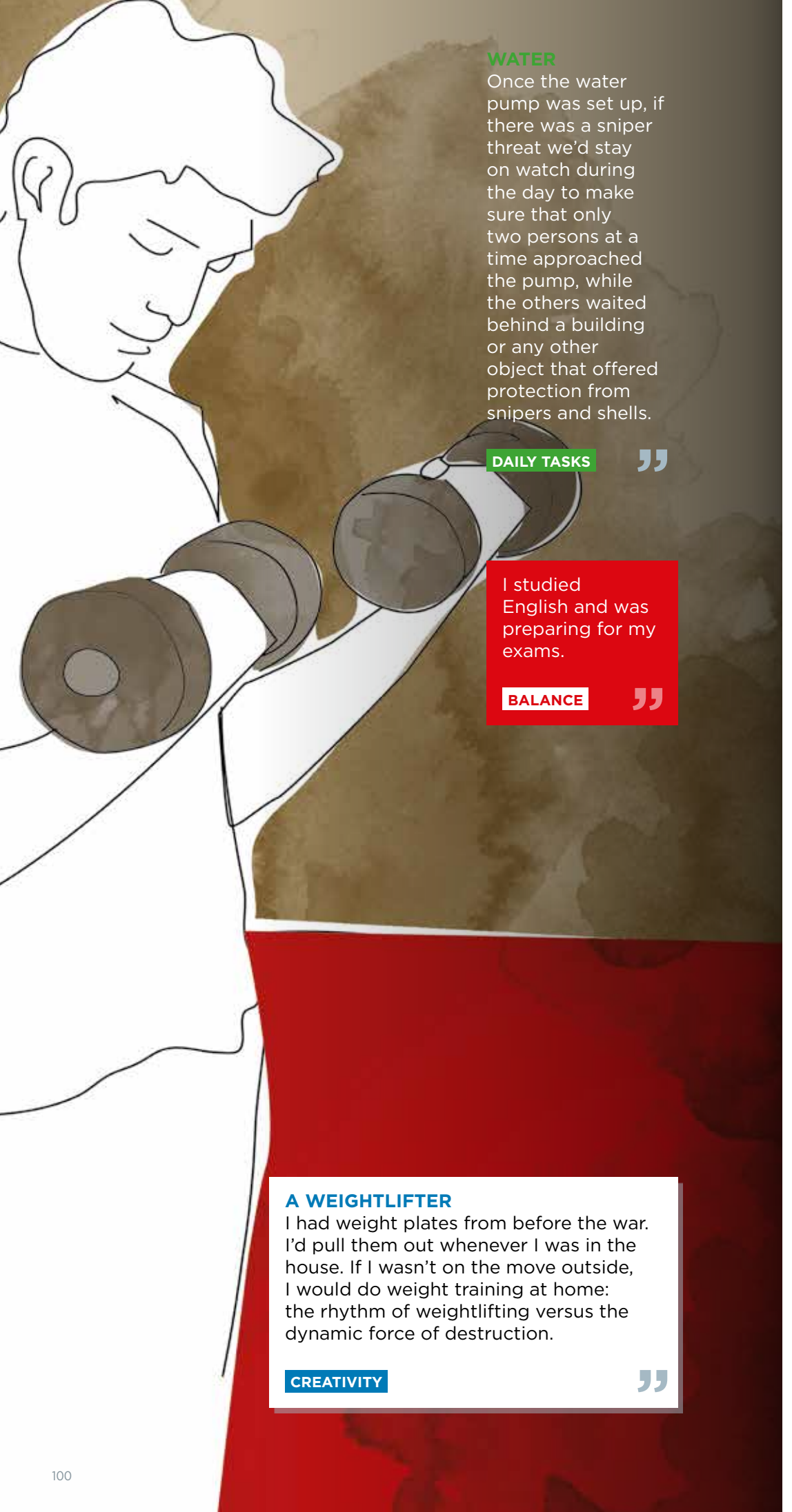
DAILY TASKS

In my free time I tried to talk to children, because it relaxed me.

BALANCE

RECYCLING
Recycling is a law of survival: 'Do not throw away anything you cannot use any more!'

CREATIVITY



WATER
Once the water pump was set up, if there was a sniper threat we'd stay on watch during the day to make sure that only two persons at a time approached the pump, while the others waited behind a building or any other object that offered protection from snipers and shells.

DAILY TASKS

I studied English and was preparing for my exams.

BALANCE

A WEIGHTLIFTER
I had weight plates from before the war. I'd pull them out whenever I was in the house. If I wasn't on the move outside, I would do weight training at home: the rhythm of weightlifting versus the dynamic force of destruction.

CREATIVITY

A CLASS
We never ran away from classes, even though we had a lot of excuses for 'copping-out', to put it in the vernacular. For example, we could have said a million times that there was a shelling, or that we couldn't come because of sniper fire, and so on. But we never did, we wanted to learn as much as possible.

CREATIVITY

FOOD
The lunch packs we would get through humanitarian aid seemed magical at the time. We could make a lunch for five people from one savory ready-made meal wrapped in foil. So the whole family would have a good lunch, relatively speaking.

DAILY TASKS

I enrolled in college and walked to my classes every day.

BALANCE

A DATE
I spent most afternoons with my girlfriend. We listened to the radio attached to an accumulator. So we simulated the normal life of young people. It was a collective illusion. The concept of the radio station was music that smelled, tasted of the sea.

CREATIVITY

The most significant event was the birth of my son.

BALANCE

GARDENS
And when we got some spring greens it was a great joy, a cabbage leaf on our dining table was a real feast at the time.

DAILY TASKS

ŠEMSA
Always smiling, looking great, dressed to the nines. Never showing fear, never running but moving around normally, despite those who, at every intersection, peered through the sniper scopes:
“I think I didn’t go out of my mind only because I worked so much, physically.”

CREATIVITY

TATTOOING
I just thought it was the right time to make a tattoo.

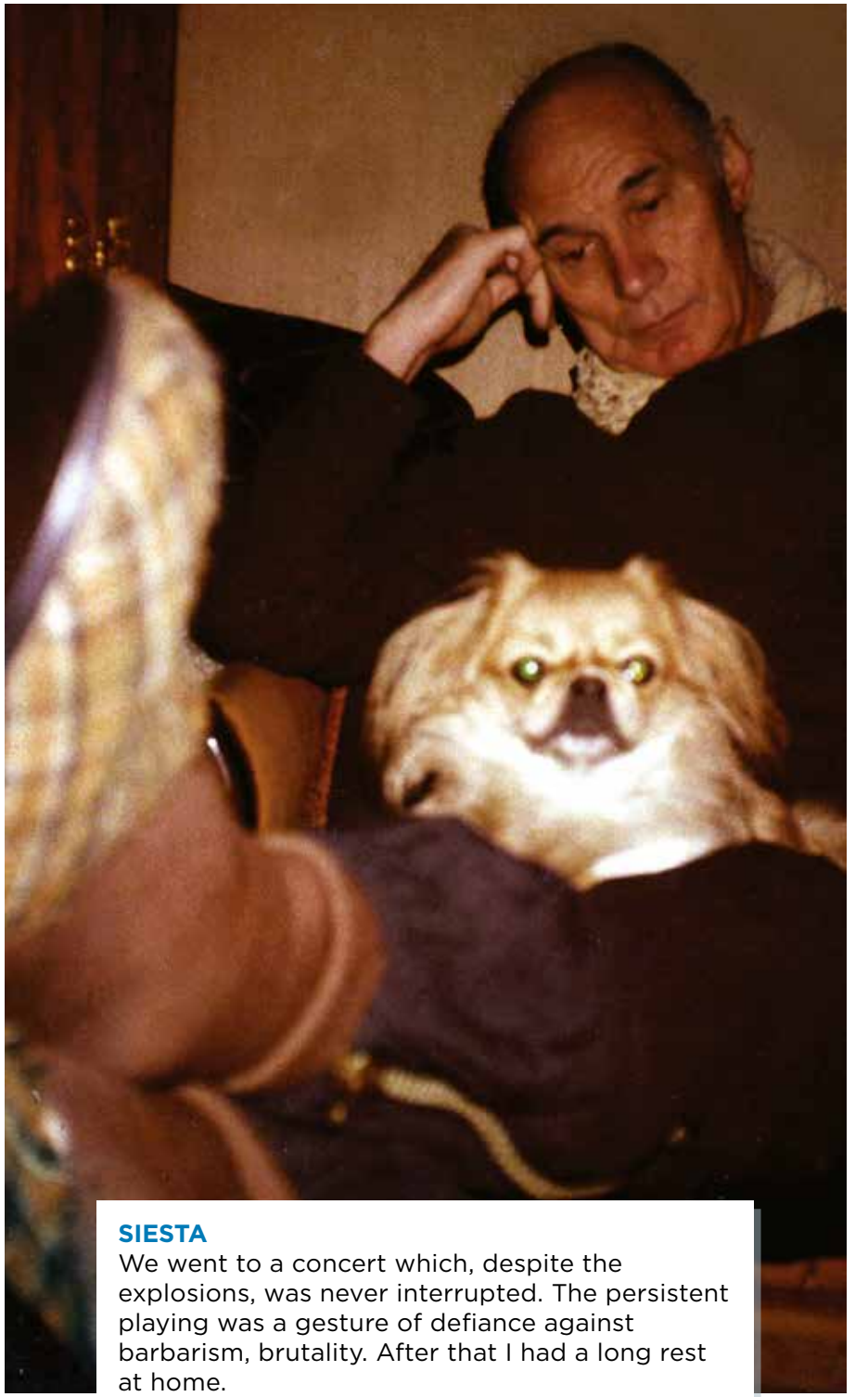
CREATIVITY ”

NATIONAL LIBRARY
Overnight about 200 shells fell either near or on the building of the City Hall, the National Library. We couldn't get inside, where the library archives were stored, to put out the fire.

DAILY TASKS ”

I tried to feel as good as possible.

BALANCE ”



SIESTA
We went to a concert which, despite the explosions, was never interrupted. The persistent playing was a gesture of defiance against barbarism, brutality. After that I had a long rest at home.

CREATIVITY ”

HEATING
I spent one whole winter without heating; then I obtained a stove and next winter kept the fire lit with anything that could burn: plastic, rubber, textiles, shoes. Later on we got gas, but only from time to time.

DAILY TASKS ”

You have to be faster, more perceptive than your usual self.

BALANCE ”

PLAYING CARDS

In my free time I was reading, playing chess with my neighbor, or playing cards with my friends. An accumulator gave us electricity, and we had cards – we entertained ourselves by completely surrendering to the game.

CREATIVITY

SCHOOL

When I couldn't go to school (we had classes only when there was no shelling), I had oral tests over the phone; teachers would call from their house, I would answer their questions on the phone.

DAILY TASKS

Free time was spent in good company, with music...

BALANCE

A CONSTRUCTOR

While they're taking everything apart, I'm constructing. It went like this for four years. It's my recipe for mental health.

CREATIVITY

A HOUSE PARTY

You had to calm the children down, entertain them somehow, never to leave them to their own devices or to do nothing. You always had to be with them, telling them stories, teaching them to paint, playing with them, singing to them.

CREATIVITY

RECIPES

I used to bake rice bread. Boil the rice well and mash it. Then add a little bit of grain flour and mix it together. This bread won't get hard even after three or four days.

DAILY TASKS

In my free time I tried to get some rest from the war.

BALANCE

A SCULPTOR

My day would begin with a coffee at college, then I'd work with students if there was no shelling. In the afternoon I'd be making sculptures if there was electricity, I made what I knew how to do – installations with things I found in the ruins. And then a long night of listening to explosions in the dark.

CREATIVITY

Mustafa Skopljak, a sculptor

SMILJA'S WEDDING

I found this sweet dress, had to wash it of course, no dry cleaner, no nothing. But after I washed it, I couldn't iron it. So I welcomed the wedding party in that un-ironed dress and all. I still remember how my husband Goran's best friend said, 'How are you going to go to the wedding so full of wrinkles?' But I wasn't worried at all, I didn't mind, the wrinkled dress meant nothing. The atmosphere was wonderful despite everything. We went to the wedding on foot, we had no car, no nothing, and as soon as the wedding was over the shelling started unfortunately, so we had to scatter as soon as we got out.

CREATIVITY

EXCHANGE OF GOODS

For a pair of boots you could get a kilo or two of sugar. There was a new market value system: a car cost 2 DM and a kilogram of sugar 100 DM.

DAILY TASKS

I planned nothing, never made decisions in advance.

BALANCE

LISTENING TO THE RADIO

We were close to each other, and especially so when darkness would fall, and we knew we'd survived the day. We listened to the radio, which worked on an accumulator. We listened to other people's voices and the music. I then made a radio *powered by a dynamo*. However, we could only listen to it if one of us was turning the bicycle pedals.

CREATIVITY

Comic Strip by Dragan Rokvic

COMIC STRIP
I was commissioned to draw a comic strip for Sarajevo 'Life' magazine. I drew several panels.

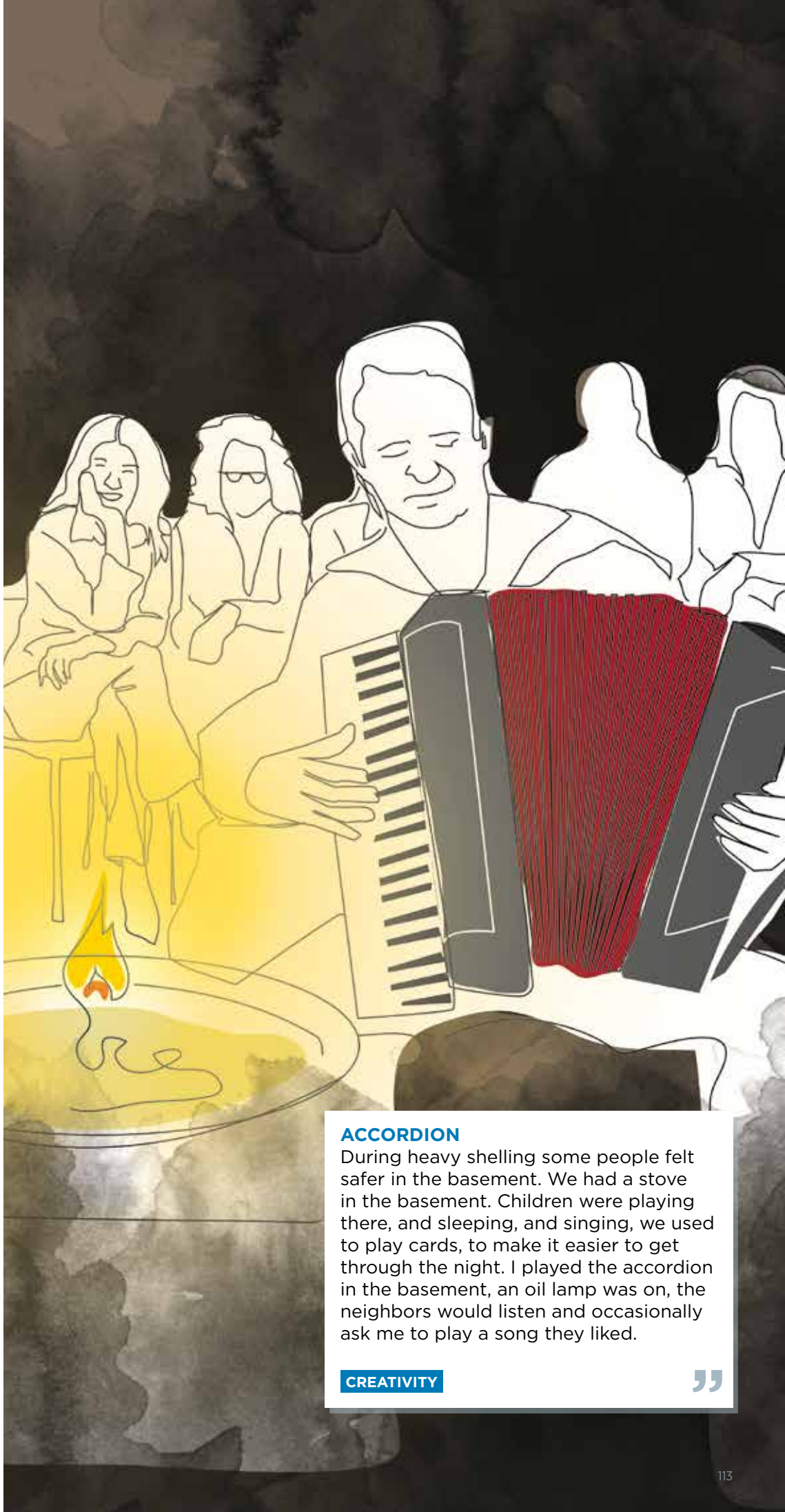
CREATIVITY

SPORT
It was the 800 meter race. Children were warming up in the channel on the north side of the stadium, which was protected from shots from the outside. After the warm up, we gathered the children in a place different from where races usually start, because the actual 800 meter starting point was on the other side, the one that was not safe. The children started off right at the moment when no one knew whether it was day or night, with just enough light for the young athletes to see where to run, but staying in a sort of shadow so that they couldn't be seen by snipers. We asked them to wear maroon jerseys – maroon being the color of the race track.

DAILY TASKS

I did not have any invention of my own, except that I wasn't worrying and I didn't let it unnerve me.

BALANCE



ACCORDION
During heavy shelling some people felt safer in the basement. We had a stove in the basement. Children were playing there, and sleeping, and singing, we used to play cards, to make it easier to get through the night. I played the accordion in the basement, an oil lamp was on, the neighbors would listen and occasionally ask me to play a song they liked.

CREATIVITY

A DRESS
I made myself a dress out of my old dresses, not so much because I needed it, but to keep me in the right frame of mind.

CREATIVITY

INVENTIONS
I made little stoves using tin cans and pieces of tin. They were good only for brewing coffee or tea.

DAILY TASKS

I went to ‘work’ out of spite.

BALANCE

TRANSPORT
It is an extraordinary experience! To ride a bike at night in a city full of holes, with opponents who also drive with no lights – on the other side.

DAILY TASKS

A MARATHON RUNNER
I trained three times a day on the Sarajevo streets. I used to run 25 to 30 kilometers a day. Intensive training requires quality food, but I never thought about it because I struggled to survive like everyone else, and I just wanted to continue to do sports and to compete in a marathon some day.

CREATIVITY

HOSPITAL
It was so cold that sometimes patients slept together under several blankets, wearing their coats, and scarves, woolly hats, gloves.

DAILY TASKS

Time was measured differently then: we measured it by how long it took to do something.

BALANCE

A TURBINE
I invented a turbine and built it on the river; it produced electricity for several buildings in the neighborhood.

CREATIVITY

GERANIUMS
I shared my water with my vegetables and my geraniums.

CREATIVITY

FOOD
I planted Japanese tomato seeds in a flowerpot on my balcony. I was eating sweet Japanese tomatoes the whole summer long.

DAILY TASKS

Decisions were made at the last minute. You could never be sure of anything.

BALANCE

HAIRCUTTING

I used to cut my neighbors' hair, sometimes for free, sometimes for a box of cigarettes. The most sought-after skills were those of a carpenter, plumber, tailor, hairdresser, knitter.

CREATIVITY

WATER

I used to bring water in jerry cans and barrels; the spring was about a 10-15 minute walk away from home. Food was mostly from humanitarian aid and what little could be found on the market and in our own garden. There weren't enough cigarettes. We had no electricity so it was either candlelight or darkness.

DAILY TASKS

I simply knew what to do and when, or if had to wait; and then I waited.

BALANCE

'NOH' THEATER

Ines Fancovic, an actress, said:
A highlight of those moments was that hungry and thirsty people could experience great pleasure in the power of actors to tell the story of the war in Sarajevo. To get to the theater I had to cross the river, and every day I had to choose between bridges, because the crossing was so dangerous.

CREATIVITY

Noh Theater directed by Haris Pasovic

I made a walkman that worked on a dynamo. Whenever I rode a bike, I listened to music.

BALANCE

TENNIS

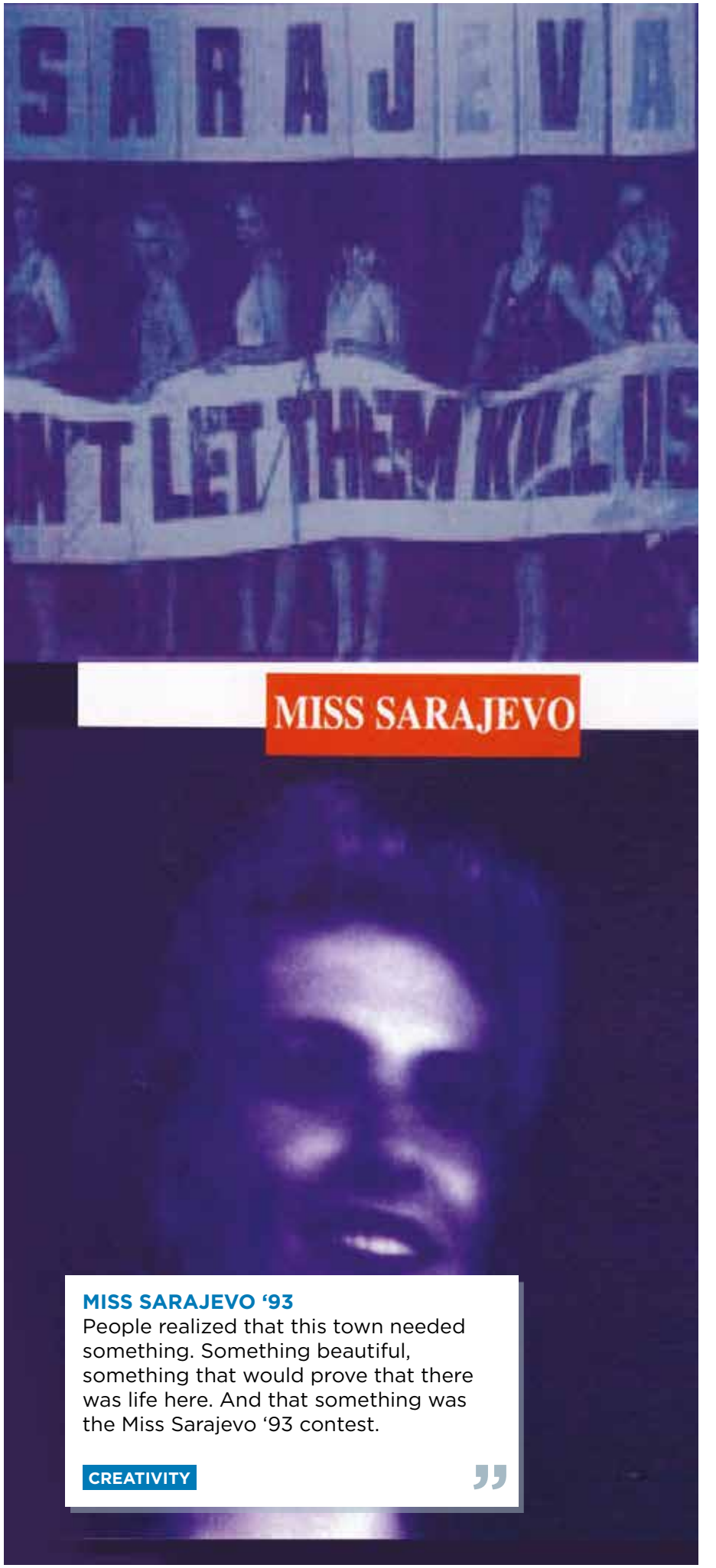
I used to go to tennis training every day, knowingly taking risks. There were snipers, grenades... shelling every day, but I think that was what forced me to go to training every day, to drain my excess energy, so it wouldn't turn against me.

CREATIVITY

HEATING

All gas installations were beyond the siege lines. The aggressor cut all gas supply to the city, they simply closed all gas valves.

DAILY TASKS



MISS SARAJEVO '93

People realized that this town needed something. Something beautiful, something that would prove that there was life here. And that something was the Miss Sarajevo '93 contest.

CREATIVITY

NEEDLEPOINT
That was a way of bartering. I stitched needlepoint pieces and bartered them for packed lunches from humanitarian aid.

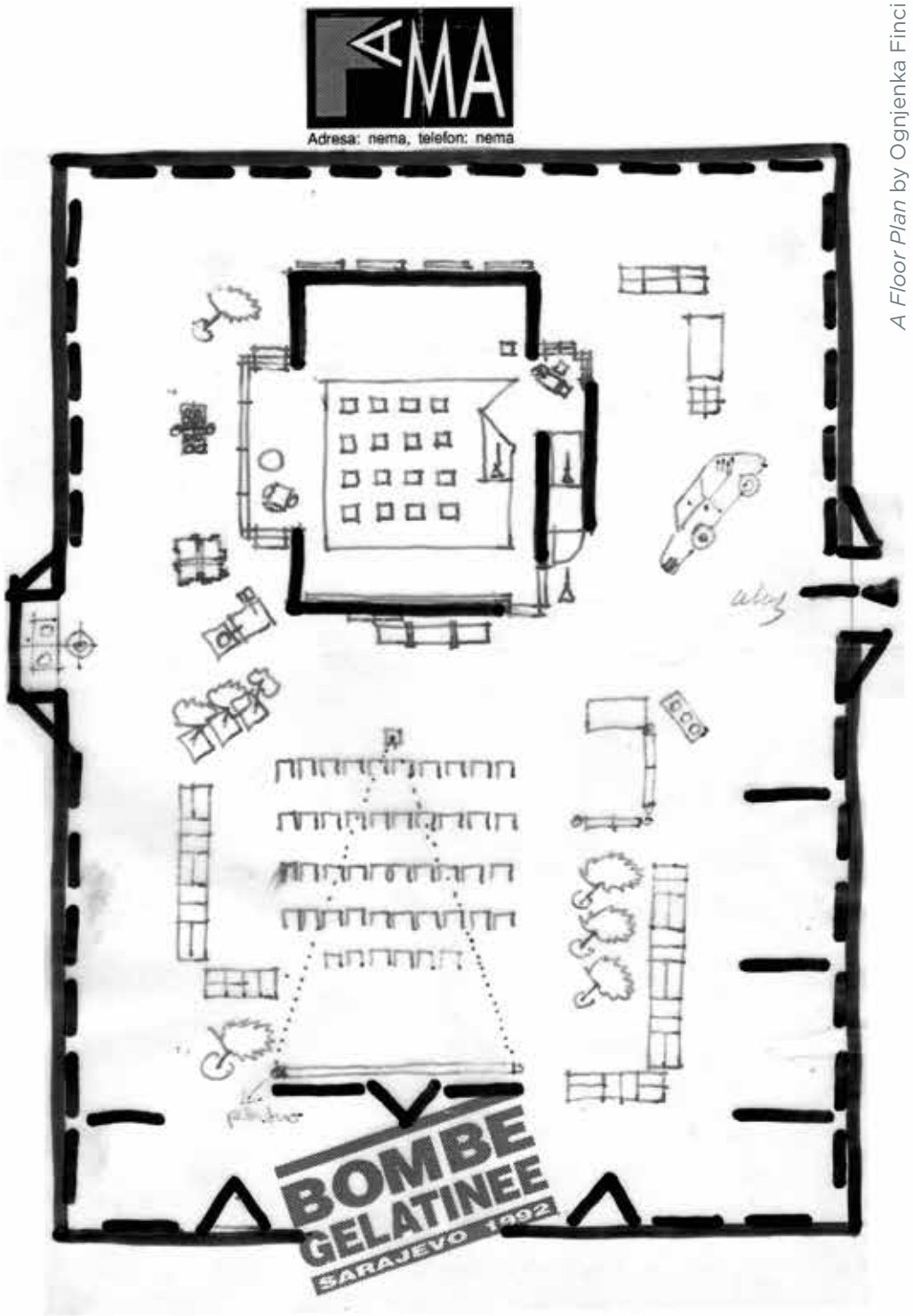
CREATIVITY

INVENTIONS
I didn't invent anything, but I used to make hair shampoos from different plants.

DAILY TASKS

During the shelling, I'd be putting the washing out.

BALANCE



A FLOOR PLAN
FAMA constructed a traditional Bosnian house using material from the ruins of former military barracks. Building a house was a form of resistance to the ongoing destruction. Ognjenka was the architect who produced the plans for the house we built. It was the only undamaged building in Sarajevo, located indoors, within a space that was not shelled.

CREATIVITY

BILLIARDS
We put a billiard table in the basement, we had an accumulator that produced enough electricity for a light bulb, and we were ready for a game.

CREATIVITY

FOOD
I attended a dozen lunches and dinners organized under the motto ‘Pick your lunch, catch your dinner’.

DAILY TASKS

Laughter, humor, jokes...

BALANCE

A SPINNING WHEEL
My granny pedaled the spinning wheel, generating electricity for my mom to read, and for my dad and brother to watch TV.

CREATIVITY

RICE SORTING
I would sort rice by hand for hours, it helped me not to become as mad as a hatter.

CREATIVITY

‘SHELTER’ THEATRE
The show achieved what we could have never expected at that point; this is what a woman from Sarajevo said then: “I thank the Sarajevo actors for helping us not to lose our minds.” During performances we heard numerous explosions. This play, like the many later ones, had a therapeutic role. You could say that a ‘cultural miracle’ began then.

CREATIVITY

HEALTH
People were desperate, there was shooting all over the place, but I was the happiest person in the world because I was pregnant!

DAILY TASKS

Nothing was as it used to be, we lived in the world of the Mad Max movies.

BALANCE

FAMA ‘THE MOBILE UNIVERSITY’

We invited professors from the whole world to give lectures in Sarajevo, in a beautiful garden full of roses; lectures on history, language, art and architecture. It was a mobile university in the open air. Citizens of Sarajevo attended the lectures, the lecturers gave their best; they all shared a tacit right to the intellectual resistance to the terrible barbarity of killing a city. Every opportunity was used not to assume the status of a victim but that of a victor.

CREATIVITY

CIGARETTES

I smoked chamomile wrapped in newspaper, and from time to time I smoked lime leaves.

DAILY TASKS

I did my best to look good.

BALANCE

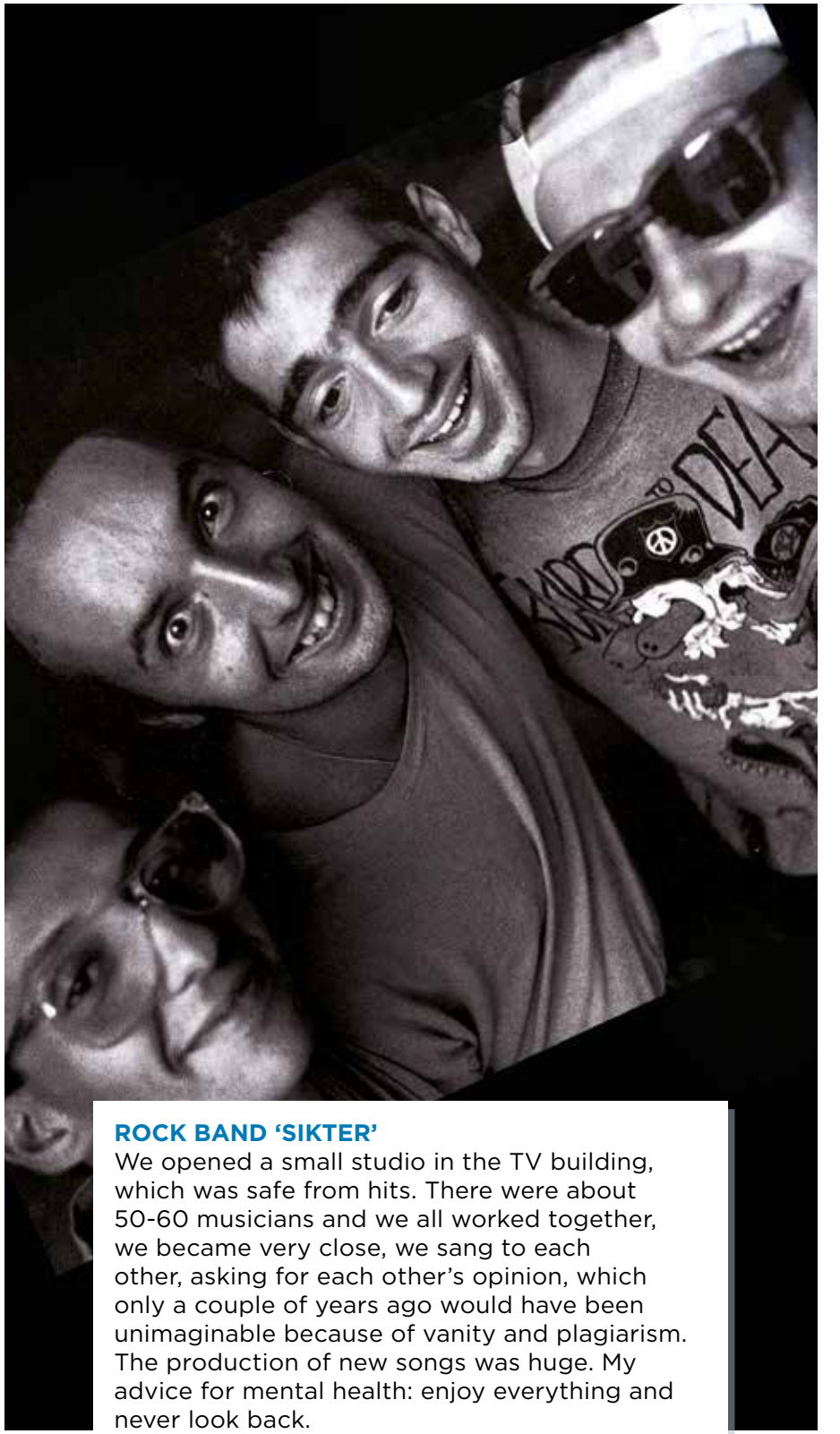
MARBLES

Somebody gave me marbles of various colors. I’d throw them and they’d spin in front of me.

CREATIVITY

TANGO
I tried to get people out of shelters and basements, and get them to dance; to dance while shells were falling all around ... and I realized the idea. People accepted it and they danced. It was the first tango in Sarajevo under siege.

CREATIVITY



ROCK BAND 'SIKTER'
We opened a small studio in the TV building, which was safe from hits. There were about 50-60 musicians and we all worked together, we became very close, we sang to each other, asking for each other's opinion, which only a couple of years ago would have been unimaginable because of vanity and plagiarism. The production of new songs was huge. My advice for mental health: enjoy everything and never look back.

CREATIVITY

LIGHTING
We made small oil lamps by inserting a ribbon or cord wick through a cork.

DAILY TASKS

Relax, be cool and do everything with a bit of humor.

BALANCE

NAIDA
In times of stress and crisis it is important to create a peaceful environment for the children.

CREATIVITY

NURSING A GARDEN
I planted a bit of everything in this tiny garden: cabbage, carrots, everything that meant life, and the garden saved us. Plants not resistant to frost should be protected or they no longer bear fruit. Cover them with a plastic sheet. The plastic foil we'd gotten from humanitarian aid would definitely help us to harvest more cabbage, more lettuce, and other plants that we'd planted in the summer.

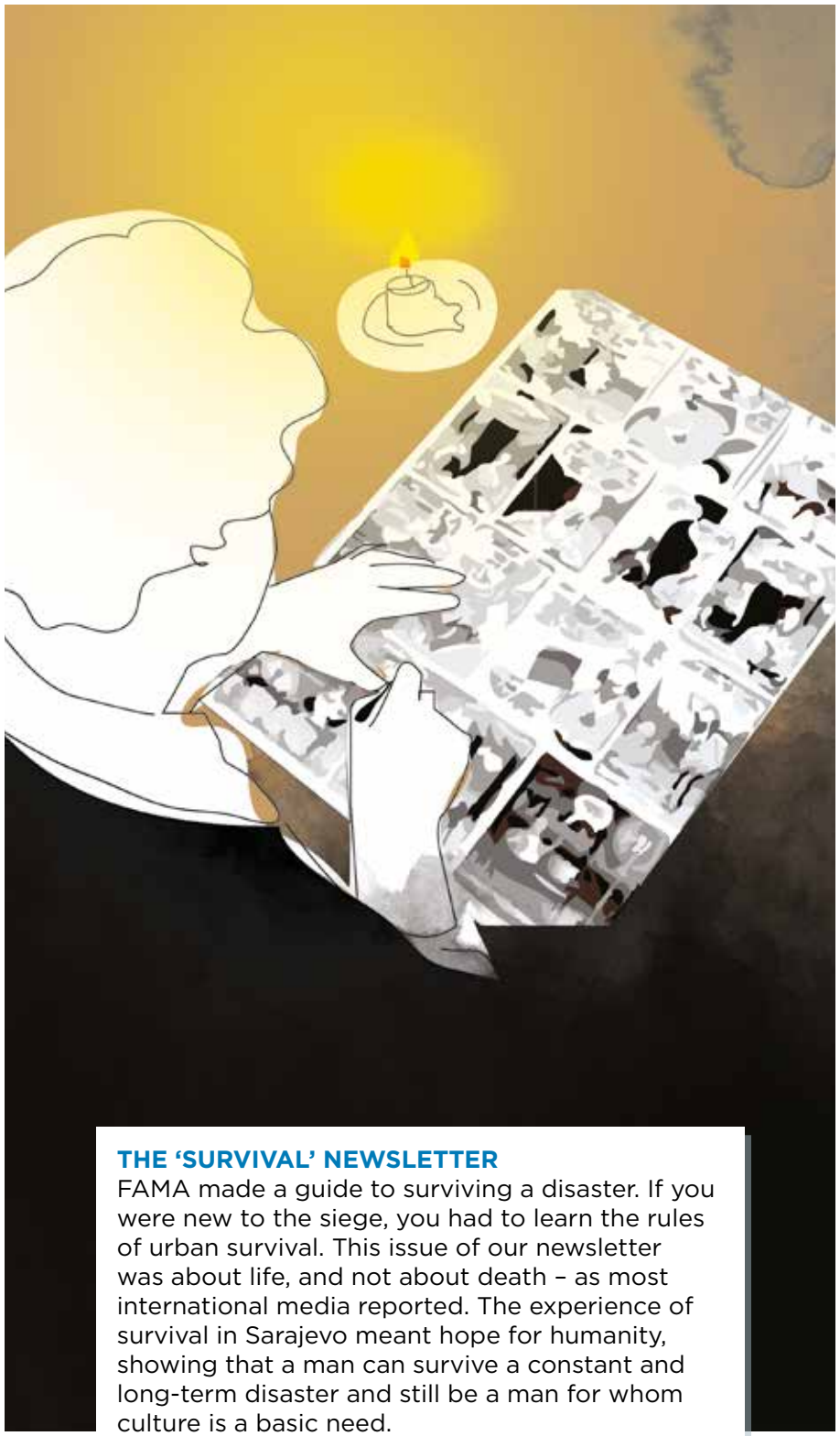
CREATIVITY

TRADE
With the help of a manual, I made a chicken incubator. Now I sell chickens.

DAILY TASKS

I stayed human.

BALANCE



THE ‘SURVIVAL’ NEWSLETTER

FAMA made a guide to surviving a disaster. If you were new to the siege, you had to learn the rules of urban survival. This issue of our newsletter was about life, and not about death – as most international media reported. The experience of survival in Sarajevo meant hope for humanity, showing that a man can survive a constant and long-term disaster and still be a man for whom culture is a basic need.

CREATIVITY

FOOD

In the beginning people had nothing to cook on. They had no firewood, no electricity, no water.

DAILY TASKS

I had a nerves of steel and the patience of a saint.

BALANCE

In my spare time I was playing with my daughter or making my own cigarettes for the next day.

BALANCE

MOVING AROUND

I used to walk hiding behind the containers and buildings.

DAILY TASKS

ROCK MUSICAL *HAIR*

It was an oasis of illusion in the theater, the illusion that there was some sort of a normal life. I say *illusion* because it lasted for only two hours. The audience would come to all the shows in town at the risk of being killed while trying to briefly forget their own reality.

CREATIVITY

A COCKTAIL CIGARETTE

It occurred to me that coltsfoot was said to be a herb beneficial for the respiratory system, so I thought of using it to make cigarettes. I dried the herb and cut it into thin strips. I took a sheet of typewriting paper, cut it into small squares and made some ciggies. But something was missing; it was bitter. I realized I had some mint, dried that as well, cut it thinly and mixed it with the coltsfoot. That was better; it was my lifeline because I was a passionate smoker.

CREATIVITY

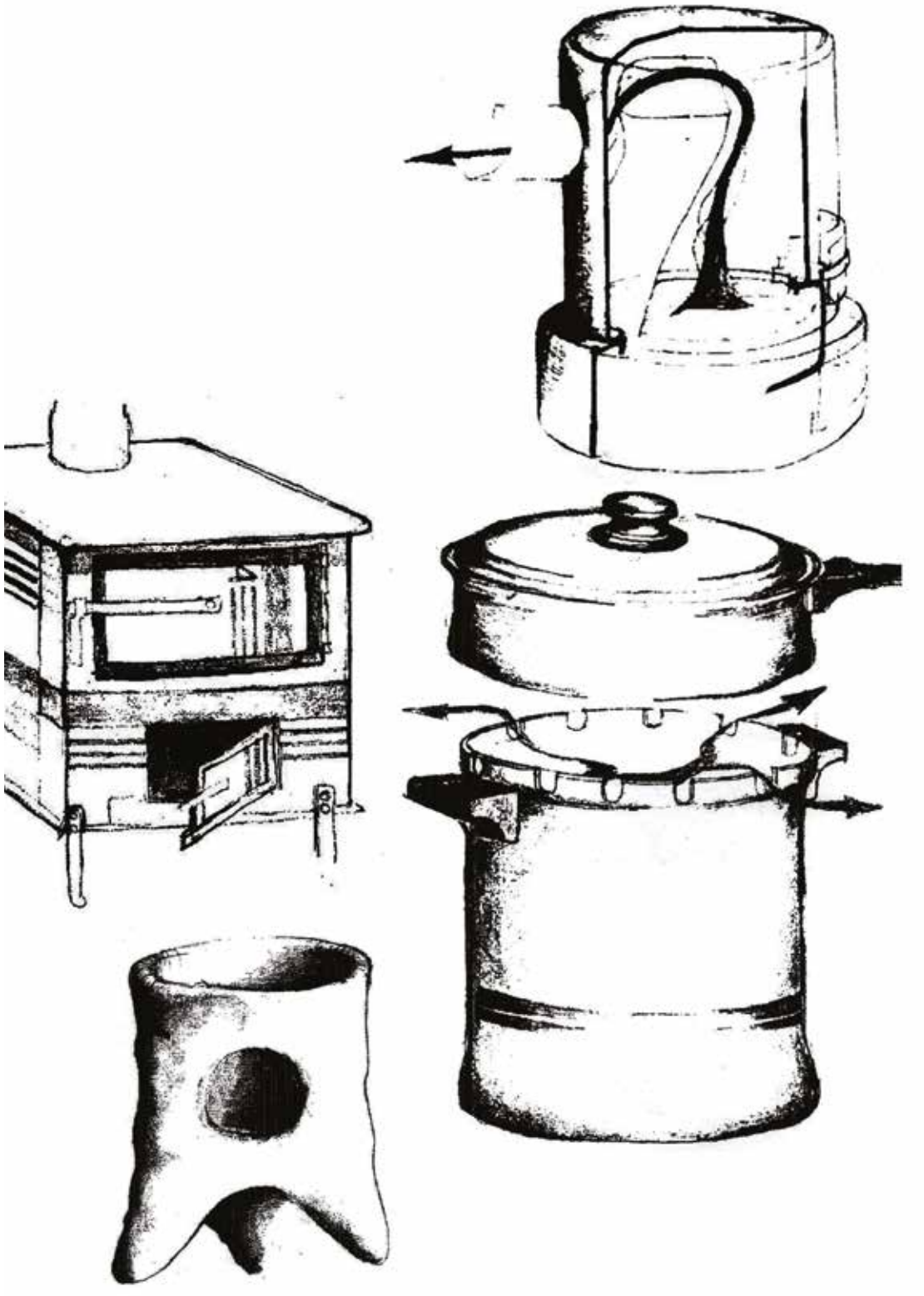
HEALTH

During the siege, I lost 15 kilograms, but I was healthy.

DAILY TASKS

I worked nonstop, and when I was not working I was thinking about what else I needed to do, and that entertained me.

BALANCE



HAND MADE STOVES

Recycling is a law of survival: ‘Do not throw away anything you cannot use any more!’

CREATIVITY

A WASHING MACHINE AS A STOVE

I have this stove made out of a washing machine. It heats like crazy. I spent my days like this: I sow seeds of parsley and tomatoes in pots, I use the two potatoes a neighbor had given me to make two potato soups. I get water from springs. I leave at five in the morning and wait until three in the afternoon to fill three jerry cans with water. We need water for cooking and washing. During all that time bombs and shells fall all around us. We have no electricity, so we sit in the dark. Darkness makes everything look worse; we try to prevent that by talking to our neighbors, sitting out in the stairwell.

CREATIVITY

SCHOOL
A class lasted for 15 minutes only. And shells were falling all around us.

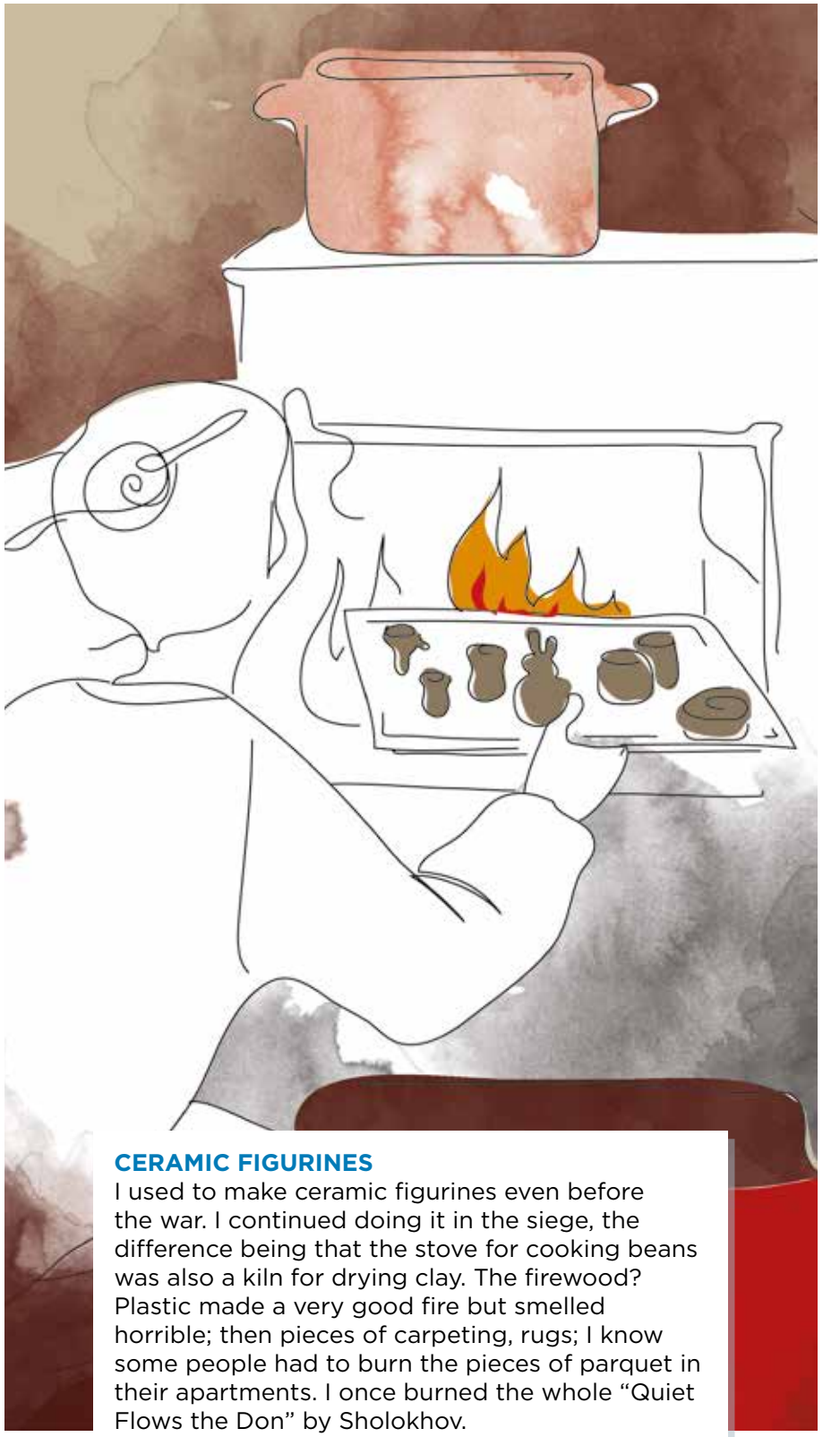
DAILY TASKS

SWEATERS
I would unravel an old sweater, and recycle the wool to make a new sweater. Later on I would unravel that one as well to make a third one. It kept me busy and helped me stop obsessing over disturbing thoughts.

CREATIVITY

I dressed up out of spite.

BALANCE



CERAMIC FIGURINES
I used to make ceramic figurines even before the war. I continued doing it in the siege, the difference being that the stove for cooking beans was also a kiln for drying clay. The firewood? Plastic made a very good fire but smelled horrible; then pieces of carpeting, rugs; I know some people had to burn the pieces of parquet in their apartments. I once burned the whole “Quiet Flows the Don” by Sholokhov.

CREATIVITY

GARDENS
I had chard in my garden, and potatoes, and pumpkins, tomatoes, onions.

DAILY TASKS

We showed a sense of humor at the end of everything.

BALANCE

MUHAMED'S TURBINE

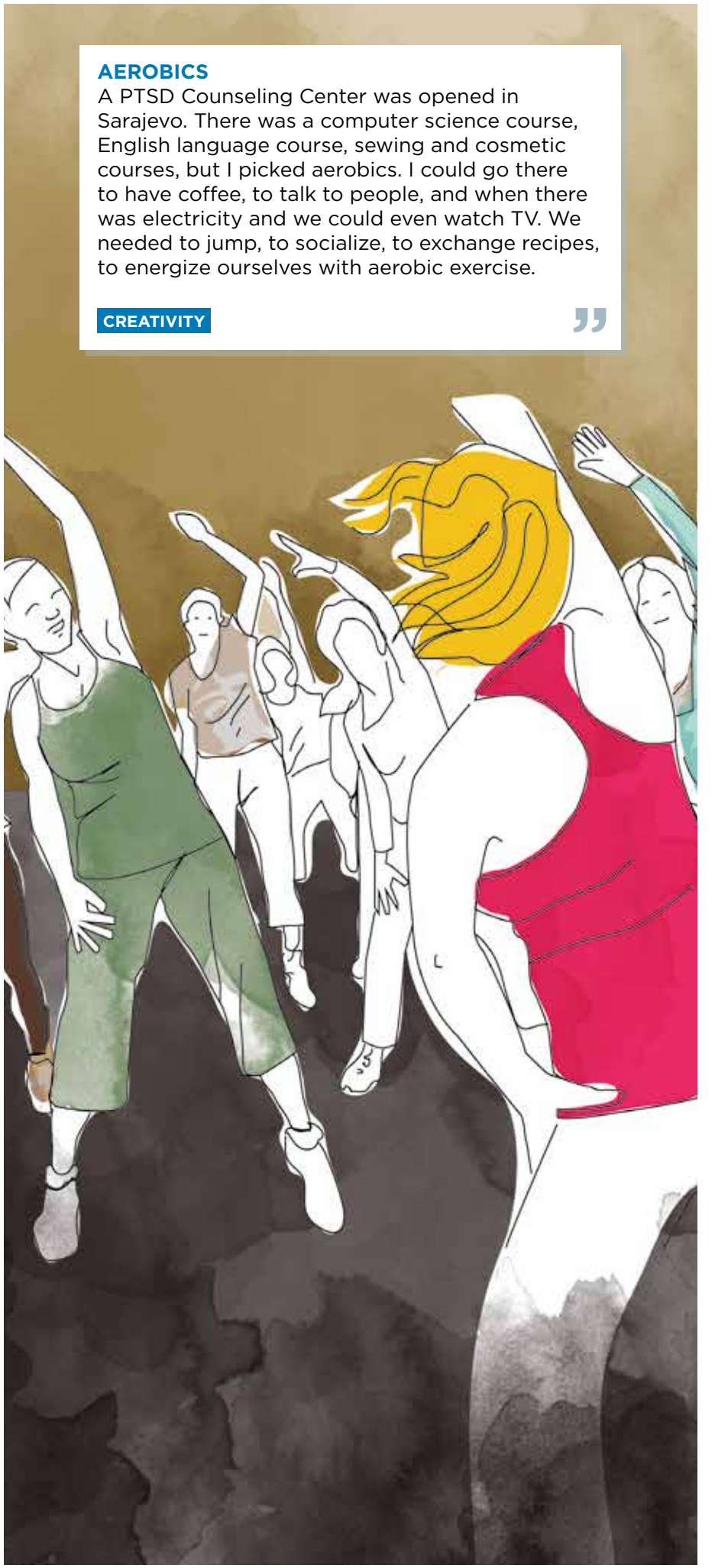
My friend made a gas lamp using infusion tubing. The lamp works in a primitive way. He thrusts the needle into the main (feed) tube, and inserts the metal (copper) tube into the other end. The flame is controlled by a clamp on the infusion tubing. And I made a turbine, a proper one. I made it by myself, and the entire neighborhood had electricity.

CREATIVITY

AEROBICS

A PTSD Counseling Center was opened in Sarajevo. There was a computer science course, English language course, sewing and cosmetic courses, but I picked aerobics. I could go there to have coffee, to talk to people, and when there was electricity and we could even watch TV. We needed to jump, to socialize, to exchange recipes, to energize ourselves with aerobic exercise.

CREATIVITY



THE PIANO
The piano keys were Siberian cold. But the sound of the piano spilled down the street, and made hurrying passers-by happy for at least a moment in time.

CREATIVITY

IMPRESSUM

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> The comparative history of mankind best illustrates that there is an all-comprehensive mind we are all part of, we all share. At some point we realize that we, as human race, all think alike.
>
> ***Branka Prpa, Historian***

WORLD AT RISK

21st century society is becoming increasingly vulnerable as a result of growing socio-economic inequalities, technological complexities, and transboundary interdependencies. On one hand, we are witnessing the formation of a new world order, as the international balance of power is shifting from familiar agents to emerging markets. On the other hand, we are faced with unprecedented risks exacerbated by, among other things climate change; terror; the rise of nationalism; proxy wars; scarcity of resources; financial volatility; distorted demographics; unstable economic patterns; an increasing number of 'failed states'; and cultural-religious tensions. As a result, we are faced with a '***perfect-Crisis-storm***;' one that can easily cross geographical, jump functional and transcend traditional time boundaries.

What can happen to 'them' can easily happen to 'us'

Numerous events in recent history have shown us that a transboundary crisis operates in one and every space simultaneously – as a result, we will soon realise that our reality has become a ***Shared Reality***. As such, the inherently flawed concept of defining relationships within society, and among different groups as 'them' and 'us' is simply not applicable in the current scheme of things. For when interconnected risks become the ***New Normal***, what can happen to 'them' can easily happen to 'us'. Subsequently, it becomes clear how little difference it will make if you are situated north or south of the equator, or if you are governed from the left, or right of the political centre. The only distinction that will matter will be between those who are resilient to incoming changes, and those who are not.

Therefore, it is our objective to launch an evidence-based ***philosophy of thinking and acting that uses the Power of Open Mind and Recycling to set-out a blueprint for Building Resilience, Combating Stress, Adapting to Changes as we progress through the 21st century***.

Miran Norderland

Excerpted from R2.1 Building Resilience Global Campaign

www.theartofsurvival.info